



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**U.S. DEMOCRACY PROMOTION AND AL  
JAZEERA: A VIEW INTO ARAB REACTIONS AND  
OPPOSING MOVEMENTS**

by

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September 2005

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REACTIONS AND OPPOSING MOVEMENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The promotion of democracy in the Arab world, an area to date resistant to effective political liberalization, has become a central pillar in American Middle East foreign policy as well as an integral element in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). How will this advocacy of democracy be received, given our theoretical and historical knowledge? The underlying assumption of U.S. policy is that democracy will moderate some of the anti-American sentiments from the region as well as undermine terrorist activities and support. Will overt American promotion of democracy cause these states to democratize? Using aspects of social movement theory, this thesis examines Arab reactions to public American promotion of democracy. I argue that America's campaign is counterproductive because it has polarized the political discourse, a result which weakens potential sources of internal pressure and distorts understandings of democracy, thus facilitating states' maintenance of the status quo. It does this through framing the message as inherently American and spurring opposing movements. Using al-Jazeera data derived from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), I recorded the connotations associated with each articulation of the word "democracy" to create a sample of competing frames to observe opposing movement developments and frame contest trends.

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## **I. U.S. DEMOCRACY PROMOTION AND AL JAZEERA: A VIEW INTO ARAB REACTIONS AND OPPOSING MOVEMENTS**

The promotion of democracy in the Arab world has become a central pillar in American Middle East foreign policy as well as an integral element in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Since the September 11 attacks, America has become convinced that redressing the Middle East's democratic deficiency is necessary to contain terrorism. President George W. Bush expressed his conviction that the attacks did not represent a one time occurrence; rather that the terrorists began a volley still in play. Terrorism is a long term problem, Bush reasoned, which requires long term solutions.<sup>1</sup> Democracy is the solution. To oppose terrorism America must support and promote democratic transitions throughout the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> Bush's underlying assumption is that democracy will moderate some of the anti-American sentiments from the region as well as undermine terrorist activities and support.

Yet the Middle East region to date has proved resistant to effective political liberalization. How will U.S. advocacy of democracy be received, given our theoretical and historical knowledge? Some democracy scholars claim that America's efforts are ill-fated, arguing that democracy cannot be imposed if there is no affinity for it within the local population.<sup>3</sup> Implicitly they are stating that either the population or the religion is adverse to democracy. However, Middle Easterners' opinion polls have shown that the majority of the people favor a democratic political system, as 80 percent of Jordanians have declared.<sup>4</sup> Contrary to claims that democracy is unsuited to the region, Arab intellectuals have gone so far as to say that it is the only acceptable and legitimate

---

1. "U.S., World Safer Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Bush Says," United States Consulate Mumbai-India, <http://usembassy.state.gov/mumbai/wwwwhwashnews2090.html> (accessed 11 March 2005).

2. Ibid.

3. Larry Diamond, "Promoting Democracy," *Foreign Policy*, no. 87 (Summer 1992), 27.

4. Max Boot, "Our Extreme Makeover," *Los Angeles Times*, 27 July 2005, [http://www.cfr.org/pub8271/max\\_boot/our\\_extreme\\_makeover.php](http://www.cfr.org/pub8271/max_boot/our_extreme_makeover.php) (accessed 19 August 2005).

political system today, theoretically reconciling democracy with Islam.<sup>5</sup> Such a perspective supports the region's favorable view of democracy, which would seem to bode well for America's efforts to promote democratic political systems. Thus, one would expect the region to applaud American pressure on its states to implement democratic reforms, a result that has not occurred to date. How can we explain this unexpected outcome?

While America's intentions are good and based on reasonable logic, I argue that the country's overt promotion of democracy in the Middle East is counterproductive since it has polarized the political discourse, a result which frustrates and distorts understandings of democracy, in the end facilitating states' maintenance of the status quo. It does this through spurring opposing movements and framing the democracy message as inherently American. Al Jazeera, the most popular Arab satellite television station,<sup>6</sup> is one site where frame contests become apparent. In this forum, America's frame is attacked and alternatives are proposed. In this thesis, I first examine if and how Middle Easterners' understanding of democracy has changed subsequent to the Bush administration's promotion of democracy in the region. Second, I investigate whether a contest over public meanings of democracy exists. Third, I discuss how frame contests may impact Arab states' policy choices.

This thesis contributes to a greater understanding of the impact of overt American democracy promotion in the Middle East by not only describing how the region is reacting, but also by presenting some statistical evidence – it does this by looking at frames and frame contests. A frame is a packaged assessment of a situation and reflects

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5. Ali R. Abootalebi, "Islam, Islamists, and Democracy," *Middle East Review International Affairs*, vol. 3, no. 1 (March 1999), <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1999/issue1/jv3n1a2.html> (accessed 12 March 2005), and Abdou Filali-Ansary, "Muslims and Democracy" in *The Global Divergence of Democracies*, ed. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 45.

6. In a 2004 survey of the region, Zogby International found that most satellite viewers watched al Jazeera for international news 62 percent in Jordan, 54 per cent in Morocco, 46 percent in the United Arab Emirates, and 44 percent in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. Information from: Benjamin Duncan, "Poll Reveals Arabs' True Feelings on US," *Al-Jazeera*, 26 July 2004, <http://english.aljazeera.net>, (accessed 10 May 2005), Samantha M. Shapiro, "The War Inside the Arab Newsroom," *New York Times*, 2 January 2005, <http://faculty.washington.edu/pnhoward/teaching/mms/arabnewsroom.pdf>, and Khaled Dawoud, "Arab Opinions," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 701 (29 July- 4 August 2004), <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/701/in2.htm> (accessed 8 September 2005).

one's position on an issue or a world view. For instance, the U.S.'s frame for promoting democracy could be interpreted as "Stop Terrorism, Spread Democracy." A frame contest is a competitive struggle between opposing movement activists (i.e. pro-democracy and, anti-democracy) for frame supremacy. Alternatively, frame contests are intrinsic to opposing movement dynamics. To clarify and for the purpose of this thesis, democracy consists of two parts; one is the concept, and the other is a foreign policy (see Figure 2). This foreign policy is the U.S.'s democracy promotion. The frames recorded reflect this distinction. Specifically, favorable and unfavorable frames are expressions that address one or both sub-elements of democracy. Favorable frames are expressions that are supportive of the concept of democracy. Favorable frames do not address the foreign policy component. Unfavorable frames are expressions that reject or criticize the foreign policy component. Unfavorable frames do not generally address the concept of democracy, but when a perspective is expressed it is ambivalent. As one may accurately discern, uses of the word "democracy" which are favorable do not mean expressed support for American democracy promotion.

The statistical evidence for this thesis is gathered by reviewing 576 records of Foreign Broadcast Information Service's (FBIS) transcription of al Jazeera satellite television station. The timeframe studied is 1 January 1998 to 1 September 2005; 1,373 data points are registered. The data points are derived by isolating, analyzing, and recording how the word "democracy" is used (or its connotation) with each articulation. Each articulation reflects a particular frame or understanding. Thus, in recording the various expressions, a sample of competing frames is possible to capture developing trends of how the region is responding to America's call for democracy. The data is organized in the following categories: pro-democracy, critical of American democracy, anti-American democracy (emotional), and neutral. Chapter III covers the thesis' methodology in greater detail. In this chapter, I begin by reviewing the importance of democracy, and then examine the literature on democracy promotion in the Middle East. I subsequently present some of the research's theoretical framework on the competitions over framing democracy as well as some of this study's findings, and, finally, I discuss the policy implications of this thesis.

## A. IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy is not just an abstract or romanticized idea; it offers domestic as well as international advantages. Tangible benefits are associated with state incorporation of democratic practices and institutions. Historically, some scholars maintain that democracies have been more consistent and effective in promoting stable economic growth than other types of political systems.<sup>7</sup> While democracies maintain reasonably strong and stable economic growth, authoritarian regimes vary in extremes either very good or very bad.<sup>8</sup> Trust is necessary for markets to function efficiently and attract investment. This entails confidence based on property rights, the rule of law, and competition factors authoritarianism stifles.

Further, democracies may be better at providing citizens' need. In Sen's now famous study comparing China and India regarding food shortages, India's democracy was found superior through the accountability generated by a free press, compelling the government to find effective solutions to avoid famine. Meanwhile, China – financially better positioned but lacking the pressure of a free press – allowed a famine to last for three years, with the resulting death toll of nearly 30 million people. Of the recorded famines worldwide, none occurred in democracies in which the media functioned as a counterbalance against the state.<sup>9</sup>

An additional factor in favor of democratic politics is that its inclusiveness tempers extremism and promotes the continuance of the democratic regime itself. Social movement scholars posit that democracies undermine state opponents' violent attacks of the system by offering these actors opportunities to make changes from within the system. This opening creates a dilemma for state opponents: if they attack the state in spite of its conciliatory stance, they risk losing popular support or alienating their sympathizers. If they decline the opportunity to participate politically, they may miss the

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7. Giovanni Sartori, "How Far Can Free Government Travel?" in *The Global Divergence of Democracies*, ed. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 57.

8. Jeff Madrick, "Democracy Has the Edge When It Comes to Advancing Growth," *New York Time*, 13 April, 2000, <http://www.stanford.edu/~wacziarg/articles/nytdemoc/nytdemoc.html> (accessed 11 December 2004).

9. Amartya Sen, "Democracy as a Universal Value" in *The Global Divergence of Democracies*, ed. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 7-8.

chance to gain credibility “legitimately” and alter the system in their favor. Given the difficulty and uncertainty of overhauling an entrenched system, an invitation to participate politically is alluring to state opponents. Additionally, because democracies set the parameters for protest, they provide manageable outlets for expressing grievances. By co-opting competing actors into one system, democracies are able to diffuse attacks of the system and compel co-opted opponents to commit to the survival of the system.<sup>10</sup>

In the international arena, political scientists found a strong negative correlation between democracies and the outbreak of fighting. They conclude that, as the number of democracies increase world wide, the likelihood of conflicts will decrease. According to recent data, over 60 percent of the countries of the world are defined as electoral democracies.<sup>11</sup> Generally, democracies do not fight democracies. In fact, the probability that two democracies will resort to armed conflict is 33 percent less than any other possible dyads.<sup>12</sup> Supposedly, democracies are less prone to war because, in a government “of the people, by the people,” the masses who bear the brunt of the costs for fighting are unlikely to support capricious wars.<sup>13</sup> Citizens constrain democratic states’ actions through their representatives and public opinion. Political opponents also limit the states’ behavior because states, sensitive to criticisms, aim to minimize censure by making more measured decisions. Consequently, democracies tend to be more peaceful.

However, democracy can also have adverse ramifications for American military interests. In 2003, Turkey’s parliament frustrated American military plans which called for a northern advance into Iraq and staging in Turkey of over 200 combat aircraft, as many as 100 helicopters, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Cavalry Division, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division – one of only two full heavy divisions committed during the war.<sup>14</sup> Having won by a

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10. Anne Marie Baylouny, “Democratic Inclusion: A Solution to Militancy in Islamist Movements? *Strategic Insights*, vol. 3, no. 4 (Apr. 2004), <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/apr/baylounyApr04.asp> (accessed 20 August 2005).

11. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, “Introduction,” in *The Global Divergence of Democracies* ed. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

12. Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001), 275.

13. Ibid.

14. Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics, and Military Lessons*, (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 153.

majority during the 2002 elections, based partly on a platform promising to represent the voters' interests, some members of the Justice and Developmental Party (AKP) – a political group characterized as Islamist – was unwilling to disregard its electoral promises and its constituents' anti-war sentiments. According to some opinion polls, approximately 90 percent of Turks opposed the Iraq war.<sup>15</sup> In March 2003, the Turkish Parliament voted against American demands to use Turkey as a staging base for their attacks on Iraq.<sup>16</sup>

Turkey's decision had a significant impact on American military planning. United States Central Command Commander General Tommy Franks, who was responsible for the war's strategy, stated, "The fact of the matter is that it was quite important, strategically and operationally, to have that very heavy force [4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division] precisely where it was [Turkish bases] until the day it moved [to launch a northern attack into Iraq]."<sup>17</sup> Consequently, American equipment and weapons, which remained afloat along Turkey's coast, had to be redirected to Kuwait. This example highlights not only the importance of democracy for military strategies and foreign policy, but also the warning that democracy in the Middle East may not translate into unconditional support of American interests. Still, democratic governments seem to be more effective at caring for their citizens' need and less belligerent than available alternatives.

## **B. LITERATURE ON PROMOTING DEMOCRACY IN THE ARAB WORLD**

Given the U.S. declared interest in promoting democracy in the Middle East, how effective can foreign pressure be in causing democratization? The record on external pressure causing democracy is mixed. A study of 61 countries that transitioned to democratic political systems revealed that only three changed independently – Sweden, Great Britain, and Switzerland. The overwhelming majority became democratic

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15. "Turkey Politics: The Costs of Ambivalence," *The Economist Intelligence Unit ViewsWire*, 2 April 2003, and Doug Bandow, "Think Tanks Wrap-up VI," *United Press International*, 2 April 2003, <http://www.nexis.com> (accessed 18 August 2005).

16. Peter J. Boyer, "The New War Machine; How General Tommy Franks Joined Donald Rumsfeld in the Fight to Transform the Military," *The New Yorker*, 30 June 2003, "Political Stability Risk," *Economist Intelligence Unit RiskWire*, 25 November, 2003, David Edgerly, "Blaming Turkey for Its Democracy," *Providence Publications* 29 May 2003, <http://www.nexis.com> (accessed 18 August 2005).

17. "U.S. Troops Aim to 'Maintain Initiative,'" *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, 31 March 2003, <http://www.nexis.com> (accessed 18 August 2005).

subsequent to external pressure or coercion.<sup>18</sup> While such studies have bolstered American enthusiasm for promoting democracy, the U.S.'s own history at effecting democratic transitions is less sanguine. Though it has had some successes such as Chile and Nicaragua,<sup>19</sup> the U.S. also had failures in Haiti and Albania.<sup>20</sup> Some scholars have argued that American democracy promotion is not about empowering the people. Citing the Philippines in 1985 as an example, they argue that American intervention has not aided in institutionalizing democratic reforms, but rather aided the survival of the status quo by encouraging regime transformations into polyarchies.<sup>21</sup> Regardless, American democracy advocacy and the literature of such efforts have focused primarily on Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa, largely ignoring the Middle East.

Expressly treating the subject of democracy promotion in the Middle East, the authors of *Uncharted Journey* argue that American efforts have missed their mark. Emphasis on promoting civil society, women's issues, and economic liberation have had little success in encouraging states to transition to democratic polities. In fact, states have manipulated American programs such as civil societies to advance their national interests. The influx of civil societies has been exploited as a means to deflect the population's criticisms and frustrations by keeping them preoccupied with organizational duties. Additionally, civil societies have led to the fragmentation of society and frustrated attempts to build a broad-based political or social movement to pressure the state. In essence, current efforts have strengthened the states' defenses while providing few incentives for democratic change.<sup>22</sup>

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18. John O'Loughlin et al., "The Diffusion of Democracy: 1946-1994," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol.88, no.4 (December 1998), 552.

19. Larry Diamond, "Promoting Democracy," *Foreign Policy*, no. 87 (Summer 1992), 39. The U.S.'s National Endowment for Democracy is credited to have facilitated the democratic transition of these countries. Guillermo O'Donnell et al., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Latin America*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), and Robert I. Rotberg, *Enduring Autocracy Enabling Democracy: The Tribulations of Southern Africa 1960-2000*, (Cambridge: World Peace Foundation, 2002).

20. Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), 306.

21. William I. Robinson, "Globalization, the World System, and "Democracy Promotion" in the U.S. Foreign Policy," *Theory and Society*, vol. 25, no. 5 (October 1996).

22. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway, ed. *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005).

### **C. THE STRUGGLE FOR “DEMOCRACY”**

How can we conceptualize the reception of democracy promotion in the Middle East? One body of literature helpful in this regard is social movement theory, due to the focus on group interactions and the emergence of oppositional movements. Conceptually, the dynamics between American democracy promoters and the Middle East resembles movement-opposition or counter-movement interactions. Although not strictly a social movement, American promotion of democracy has been experienced in the region as a movement, one that attempts to persuade through numerous non-governmental organizations, media, and public relations declarations. This is not the imposition of democracy through overt means, as in colonialism or regime change. Thus, viewed from the Middle East, the promotion of democracy appears as a social movement. Yet movements clearly are not alone in making demands for political, policy or societal changes. Thus, the existence of a movement making demands spurs counter movements with alternative interpretations of the issue. Social movement theory with its appreciation of framing or contests in the public sphere, and an acknowledgement of movements and their counters, is able to decipher the implications of this interaction. Al Jazeera is one forum where this dynamic is manifest, facilitating an analysis of the region’s reaction to the U.S. promotion of democracy.

Specifically, opposing movements have emerged to counter America’s framing of democracy, which is viewed as inherently American and thus adverse to regional interests. “Framing,” is used here to describe the process of explaining or offering an interpretative meaning of the word. Oppositional movement competition reflects in the frame contests evident in the media. The opposition has tried to discredit (critical frames), vilify (anti-U.S. or emotional frames), and neutralize (critical and anti frames) America’s effort by offering competing frames of democracy that resonate with the people of the region. An example of an anti-U.S. frame is contained in the statement that “we believe that democracy is the civilized face of dictatorship. The democracy has revealed its face and has become the terrorist democracy: you are either with us or with



terrorism."<sup>23</sup> Still, anti –U.S. frames of democracy have been minimal. The majority of the unfavorable frames (critical and anti) expressed have been critical or have questioned American credibility in promoting democracy (see Chapter IV).

Those who are favorable toward democracy and democratic reforms have had to qualify their interpretation of democracy and distance themselves from American efforts. One guest clarified, "The Arabs should initiate dialogue on the thinking and religious rhetoric and syllabuses but this should not be tied to this U.S. campaign. This is because any move or attempt would appear as being the result of pressures and in response to U.S. pressures."<sup>24</sup> Consequently, the emergent frame contests are between "real democracy" and "American democracy" frames. "Real democracy" is presented as self-evident and not requiring of additional clarification. Whereas, "American democracy" is portrayed as not only American in design, but also associated with state collapse, prisoner abuse, violence, death and general destruction. The frame contests have reflected prominently since 2004. There were also attempts to present other alternatives. One option called for a democracy that reflects Arab cultural and historical sensitivities and is separate from American or Israeli interests. Another alternative was political Islam. These alternative frames however were secondary to the dominant "real" or "American" frames. The data shows consistent support for democracy in the region. Nonetheless, by 2005 a clear polarization of the political discourse on democracy developed with favorable and unfavorable sentiments reaching near parity.

Emotions also play a central role in polarizing the political discursive space. By framing democracy as inherently American, America unwittingly facilitated opposing movement actors' attacks on its frame. The combination of America's framing of democracy and its attack against Iraq created a powerful incentive for movement entrepreneurs to react. In other words, America provided its opponents the "cognitive

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23. "Al-Jazirah Television Interviews Muslim Leaders In Britain On New Anti-Terrorism Act," FBIS GMP20011117000196, 16 November 2001. Of note, all FBIS records are available from the electronic database at <http://www.fbis.gov>. Also, prior to 2001 FBIS used the spelling "Al-Jazeera;" thereafter the spelling changed to "Al-Jazirah." I have selected to use the spelling al Jazeera for this thesis. I have kept the source's spelling on al Jazeera (i.e. FBIS Al-Jazirah or al Jazirah, etc.)

24. "Al-Jazirah TV on Impact of US Campaign on Liberties in Arab Countries," FBIS GMP20011123000224, 22 November 2001.

liberation” they needed to gain legitimacy to respond.<sup>25</sup> Specifically, the outbreak of the Iraq war in 2003 gave opposing movement entrepreneurs the event necessary to convert initial feelings of indignation to long term moral outrage. That is, movement activists perceived America’s aggression against Iraq as an opportunity to galvanize and stir the peoples’ consciousness using emotion. Within a social movement context, emotions are created and reinforced to capture the conscience of the audience. Media images serve to add saliency and to strengthen these emotions.<sup>26</sup>

In competing to dominate peoples’ consciousness, a frame contest ensues, which frustrates and distorts understandings of democracy and creates an implacable schism within the political space. Choosing to side with democracy becomes equated with siding with America. Aligning oneself with America is analogous to self-hatred and betrayal, and is and shunned as an acceptable option. The media present movement and opposing movement demands for the people to choose. Given the serious implication of these demands, people are compelled to make a decision – in so doing, the divide becomes more accentuated.<sup>27</sup> In the process of formulating a coherent and divergent understanding of democracy from that of America, opposing movement activists denigrated the importance of democracy. This leads to, at minimum, confusion and, at maximum, total rejection of democracy. Democracy’s definition is broadened to mean everything and nothing concomitantly. For instance, democracy has been defined as Israeli repression, freedom of opinion, Palestinian rights to political power, respect for individual choice, Saudi enforcement of *sharia*, and reestablishment of Iraqi unity.

While Middle Eastern states remain the primary agents for political change, media pressure has been effective in prompting policy changes when a consensus on issues exists.<sup>28</sup> However, American promotion has not resulted in helping to form a consensus

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25. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, “Introduction: Why Emotions Matter,” in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, ed. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 7.

26. Randall Collins, “Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention,” in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, ed. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 27-43.

27. Ibid., 41.

28. Marc Lynch, “Beyond the Arab Street: Iraq and the Arab Public Sphere,” *Politics & Society*, vol. 31, no.1 (March 2003).

in support of democracy. On the contrary, American intervention has intensified and increased polarization on the issue. Attention that could have been directed against the state is diverted to debating the merits of democracy. This diversion has decreased the states' threat perception and need to address reform demands. States have also capitalized on the situation. Making conciliatory gestures (i.e. Jordan's reconstitution of a nominal parliament) for American consumption, they secure resources such as financial aid to strengthen their security apparatus and coincidentally their survivability.

#### **D. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Social movement scholars have long noted that "...histories ... reveal powerful analogies between the processes driving social movements within national polities and a range of other processes, both 'national' and 'international.'"<sup>29</sup> Reaction to American promotion of democracy is one such process to which social movement theory offers valuable insights. As democracy promotion becomes a foreign policy norm, the field may consider exploring whether transnational movements composed of states have a greater likelihood of success compared to non-governmental transnational movements.<sup>30</sup> This research is an initial effort to systematically analyze the Arab world's reaction to the American campaign. Greater transnational polling data is needed from the area to bolster these findings and larger sample sizes may also prove useful. Nonetheless, this research shows that social movement analysis is flexible and parsimonious, well suited to examining how populations experience U.S. democracy promotion.

The implication of this research for policy makers is that greater consideration of public diplomacy is necessary. For "... what matters in sending a message is not how *you* would understand it, but how *others* will understand it."<sup>31</sup> Democracy promotion is a commendable goal; however, the close association of the concept with American interests complicates efforts. To achieve results, disaggregating democracy from American foreign policy may be worthwhile. Otherwise, opposition to democracy may continue as

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29. Charles Tilly, "Social Movements and (All Sorts of) Other Political Interactions – Local, National, and International – Including Identities," *Theory and Society*, vol. 27, no. 4 (August 1998), 478.

30. Michael McFaul, "Democracy Promotion as a World Value," *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 1, 147-163.

31. Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 187.

democracy is viewed as an American agenda. This recommendation does not suggest, however, that Arabs instantly reject anything that is American to include its promotion of democracy or other concepts. The data does not support such a conclusion, and to accept this assumption as fact only impedes accurate assessments to formulate sound policies. In spite of attacks against fellow Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the deteriorating conditions for Palestinians in the occupied territories, the evidence shows that until 2004, the region remained optimistic that America would succeed in encouraging the states to implement democratic reforms. Additionally, the evidence indicates that part of the region's resistance stems from its lack of trust in the U.S. American credibility is badly degraded and actions alone are insufficient to recapture its lost political capital from the region. This capital is fundamental to American soft power to enhance its "... ability to get what you [it] want[s] through attraction rather than coercion or payments."<sup>32</sup> Fortunately, the concept of democracy is widely popular. Therefore, through consistent policies, moderated rhetoric, and time, America may serve as a positive catalyst in furthering democracy in the Arab world and improve its image while pursuing its national interests.

As the discussion on Turkey's parliamentary opposition to American demands illustrates, political developments can have dire consequences for military operations. In support of the political establishment, contingency plans must remain readily available and reflect the broad range of political outcomes. Also, military leaders must become more adept at understanding the impact of political discourse to minimize sending conflicting or counterproductive messages. To understand how messages will be interpreted requires greater historical and cultural understanding which suggests increased investment in personnel education and training.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

America's overt promotion of democracy has polarized the political discourse in the Middle East. This is counterproductive to American national interests because it frustrates and distorts understandings of democracy and facilitates states' maintenance of the status quo. The issue of democracy remains relevant and important for American

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32. Joseph S. Nye, Jr. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), x.

policy makers and military strategists. Due in part to the lack of representative democracies in the region and America's nascent role in its advocacy, literature on the impact of American promotion in the region is limited. This thesis aims to help fill the void and provide statistical data that shows how the region is reacting. The data indicates that a bifurcation within the political space has occurred; this segmentation does not bode well for democracy as it undermines the internal pressure which a consensus of popular opinion could have exerted. The implications for social movement theory, American foreign policy, and the military suggest that additional research on this topic is warranted. Still, this thesis offers a preliminary look at some of the developing trends.

In Chapter II, I provide background information on the key and relevant issues of promoting democracy in the Middle East. This chapter helps to place the study's theoretical framework into perspective to better understand why some opposing movement formation was inevitable. It begins with a discussion of the difficulty of defining democracy and democracy promotion, then provides a historical review of America's role as an advocate of democracy in the region, and ends with highlights of current assessments of America's efforts.

In Chapter III, I present the thesis' theoretical framework. I explain how social movement theory helps explain group actions and reactions, and discuss the significance of frame contests as they pertain to group dynamics. Turning to the data used for this study, I review the role of al Jazeera and explore why monitoring and analyzing the views on this medium illuminates oppositional trends within the Arab public sphere. I then outline the methodology used in this study.

In Chapter IV, I explain my four main findings. Frames have changed since the commencement of American promotion of democracy in the Middle East; a contest of frames is evident. Credibility remains a central problem in advancing American interests, and these factors combined have led to a polarization of the political space. In light of these findings, I explore the implications for states and democratization.

In the concluding chapter, I summarize my basic argument and address some possible criticism of the study. For instance, some could argue that my study is no longer applicable because al Jazeera is changing, and so the discourse may also be changing. I

address these types of criticisms and reemphasize the lessons which can be gleaned from this study's findings.

## II. BACKGROUND ON DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN THE ARAB WORLD

Democracy is a broad topic, the breadth of which cannot and will not be addressed in its entirety in this thesis. A basic understanding of the subject and its historical relevance to American foreign policy, however, is integral to this study. This chapter provides the necessary background information to improve the understanding of subsequent research data. In this chapter, I examine the challenge of defining democracy and democracy promotion, then provide a brief historical overview of U.S. policy and democracy promotion in the region. In conclusion, I assess current American efforts to effect democratic policies.

### A. DEFINING DEMOCRACY

How does the Bush administration define democracy? Following the Saudi elections in 2005, President George W. Bush announced that the election served as a testament to Saudi Arabia's progress toward democratic reform.<sup>33</sup> Is Bush's conclusion justified? Democracy is a difficult word to define and standardize with static characteristics because, with time and experience, it changes. Multiple and varied interpretations of democracy exist. Philosopher W.B. Gallie described democracy as one of the "essentially contested concepts" for it is "the appraisive political concept *par excellence*."<sup>34</sup> Gallie's contested concepts include words (for example, art, champion, democracy, religion, and social justice) that incite endless disputes without creating consensus or resolution. The disputes continue because these words represent complex, malleable and important issues that invigorate debates. Parties compete to appropriate terms laden with positive affirmations. "I am a democratic state" translates to "I am legitimate, I take care of my citizens, and I am fair." In other words, what is debated is

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33. "President Discusses Freedom and Democracy," *The White House*, 29 March 2005, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/03/20050329.html> (accessed 22 June 2005).

34. Quoted in David Collier and Steven Levitsky, "Democracy 'With Adjectives:' Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," Working Paper #230 (August 1996), <http://www.nd.edu/~kellogg/WPS/230.pdf> (accessed 31 July 2005).

not the proper definition of the word, but rather the appropriateness of its application.<sup>35</sup> For instance, is Kuwait a democracy? While Kuwait has had a National Assembly or parliament since 1962, its powers are limited, and it represents a small fraction of the total population; only Kuwaiti citizens, less than 30 percent of the total population, are allowed to vote. In 1981, only three percent of the total population voted in the elections.<sup>36</sup> The parliament does not balance against the executive body; ultimate authority rests with the king. When the National Assembly conflicts with the monarch's interests, it is dissolved and replaced, as occurred in 1976 and 1986.<sup>37</sup>

Traditionally, democracy has been defined basically as "government by the people, exercised directly or through elected representatives." This definition emphasizes a process, not a particular outcome. Legitimacy and the right to rule come from the correct application of the procedure for choosing leaders from this definition. However, more than one definition persists.<sup>38</sup> David Collier and Steven Levitsky categorized five different definitions of democracy. In hierarchical order, these variations are: 1) electoralist, 2) procedural minimalist, 3) expanded procedural minimalist, 4) prototypical conception of established industrial democracy and 5) maximalist. In 1942, Harvard professor Joseph Shumpeter posited that elections are required for contemporary democracies. Democracies use an electoral process to fill political positions through "regular, free [broad suffrage], and fair [minimal fraud] elections among competing parties."<sup>39</sup> Beginning in 1978, scholars such as Juan Linz argued that, in addition to elections, democracy needed to ensure basic civil liberties such as freedom of speech, assembly, and association. Later, other scholars, including Samuel P. Huntington, contended that elections alone are inadequate indicators of democracy. For a state to be characterized as democratic, elected officials must have the power to effectively govern.

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35. See, Kenneth Smith, "Mutually Contested Concepts and Their Standard General Use," *Journal of Classical Sociology*, vol. 2(3), 330-332, C. McKnight, "Medicine as an essentially contested concept," *Journal of Medical Ethics*, vol. 29, no. 4 (August 2003), 261, and William I. Robinson, "Globalization, the World System," 623-627.

36. Heather Deegan, *The Middle East and Problems of Democracy*, (Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 37

37. *Ibid.*, 35-41.

38. *American Heritage College Dictionary*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company: 1993), 369.

39. Diamond, x.



Scholars have used individual case studies to categorize states as democratic with caveats. In this classification, Collier and Levitsky record over one hundred subtypes of democracies. These subtypes contain relaxation of the various elements of democracy. For instance, they labeled Einar Berntzen's "Democratic Consolidation in Central America" as an example of U.S.-imposed democracy where national sovereignty is weakened. The final category of maximalist is reflected in Richard Fagen's writing. Maximalist democracies are rare and ideal types. Egalitarianism permeates all aspects of the state (social, political and economic) and political participation resembles the practices of the Athens model. Collier and Levitsky conclude that their review of the various definitions of democracy does not provide any definitive or absolute definitions of democracy given that the definition is continuously amended to fit its particular user's need.<sup>40</sup>

Defining democracy promotion is equally contentious. William Robinson posits that American promotion of democracy is actually promotion of polyarchy. Polyarchy involves the masses electing from a select pool of competing elites to rule. The advantage of having a polyarchic system is that it facilitates maintenance of the status quo. Polyarchy focuses exclusively on the political process (elected officials) and not on substance (social and economic inequalities). Robinson charges that American foreign policy is based on maintaining the status quo and its elites which requires undermining popular forces that may seek democratization.<sup>41</sup> In fact, NED proponents Larry Diamond, Juan Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset seem to support Robinson's claim that America's promotion of democracy is synonymous with promoting polyarchy. They write that NED is exclusively focused on the political aspect of the government and not in the social or economic realms.<sup>42</sup> In other words, what is important is not that significant societal changes take place or that the people are empowered, but that an increased number of elites are included in political contests. This method of inclusion and electoral contests serve to mitigate demands for significant change.

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40. David Collier and Steven Levitsky, "Democracy 'With Adjectives,'" 11.

41. William I. Robinson, "Globalization, the World System," 625.

42. Ibid.

## B. U.S. POLICY AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson proposed an electrifying concept. Democracy, Wilson suggested, could stave off future wars such as World War I. If more countries were formed based on the principles of self-determination, and citizens were included in national decision-making, reckless and secretive aggressive foreign policies would become impossible. World War I was the consequence of autocratic states behaving selfishly. “No peace can last, or ought to last, which does not recognize and accept the principle that governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed,” he said.<sup>43</sup> The Middle East embraced Wilson’s message: the Wafd from Egypt, King Faisal of Syria, and the Kurds all pleaded their case at the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>44</sup> Wilson dispatched Dr. Henry Churchill King and Charles R. Crane to conduct surveys in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine as part of the Peace Conference Inter-Allied Commission on Mandates in Turkey to determine the people’s preferences. Among many of its findings, the King-Crane commission reported that the majority of the people favored independence, but if a mandate was mandatory they preferred American tutelage.<sup>45</sup> America, however, was wary of foreign entanglement and declined an active role in the Middle East which it viewed as a British and French sphere of influence. In spite of the region’s enthusiasm for Wilson’s message, their preferences were discarded.

Since President Wilson’s advocacy of democracy, American presidents have downplayed democracy in favor of *real politik* concerns. Containment of the “Soviet threat” came to dominate American foreign politics and became the lens through which events were interpreted. Additionally, the U.S. sought to preserve stability or the status quo in the region for ease of access to the region’s oil reserves. In 1947, President Harry Truman announced “totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of

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43. Michla Pomerance, “The United States and Self-Determination: Perspectives on the Wilsonian Conception,” *The American Journal of International Law*, vol. 70, no.1 (January 1976), 2.

44. William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 194-196.

45. The King-Crane Commission Report, August 28, 1919, Hellenic Resource Network, <http://www.hri.org/docs/king-crane/> (accessed 27 May 2005).

the United States.”<sup>46</sup> It therefore “...must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”<sup>47</sup> The Eisenhower administration shared President Truman’s belief in the need to defend democracy and resist communism and totalitarianism. He added:

Considering her [Soviet] announced purpose of Communizing the world, it is easy to understand her hope of dominating the Middle East ... [which] contains about two thirds of the presently known oil deposits of the world and it normally supplies the petroleum need of many nations of Europe, Asia and Africa. The nations of Europe are peculiarly dependent upon this supply, and this dependency relates to transportation as well as to production ... If the nations of that area should lose their independence, if they were dominated by alien forces hostile to freedom, that would be both a tragedy for the area and for many other free nations whose economic life would be subject to near strangulation.<sup>48</sup>

The Eisenhower Doctrine called for the defense of any Middle Eastern state threatened by communist forces. Eisenhower feared strangulation not only from communists but also Arab nationalists that he considered communist satellites – most notably Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser. Following the 1958 Lebanese internal crisis, during which President Camille Chamoun invoked the Eisenhower Doctrine to prevent his ousting, Eisenhower blamed the incident on Nasser.<sup>49</sup> He explained that the Lebanese incident showed Nasser’s true intent, which was to control access to the region’s oil supplies and to enrich and empower himself at the peril of Western powers.<sup>50</sup> To protect American interests, it became necessary to support regimes capable of maintaining stability in partnership with the U.S., regardless of these regimes’ lack of

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46. Doris A. Graber, “The Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines in the Light of the Doctrine of Non-Intervention,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol.73, no. 3 (September 1958), 321.

47. *Ibid.*, 321.

48. Special Message to the Congress on the situation in the Middle East, 5 January 1957, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, <http://eisenhower.archives.gov/midleast.htm> (accessed 31 July 2005).

49. Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon: A Shattered Country*, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 2002), 69-76.

50. H.W. Brands, Jr. “Decisions on American Armed Intervention: Lebanon, Dominican Republic, and Grenada,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 102, no.4 (Winter, 1987-1988), 611.

freedom. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles clarified, “These [authoritarian regimes] are not the people we want to support ... [but] we know that we cannot make a transition [to democracy] without losing control of the whole situation.”<sup>51</sup>

U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East remained unchanged until 1979. While maintaining a status quo favorable to U.S. interests had been fundamental, in the wake of the Iranian revolution and the capture of fifty-two American diplomats, calls for promoting democratic change as a means of ensuring peace returned. President Ronald Reagan expressed “... America must actively wage the competition of political ideas – between free government and its opponents – and lend our support to those who are building the infrastructure of democracy.”<sup>52</sup> Though America continued to support authoritarian regimes such as Iraq, organizations like the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which was created in 1983, served as an extension of American policy to inoculate and promote democracy globally to secure stability. By 1992, NED and other U.S.-sponsored democracy promotion entities had democratization programs in 109 countries, yet less than one percent of American efforts were targeted at Middle Eastern regimes.<sup>53</sup>

The end of the Cold War era and concomitant collapse of the quintessential communist state ushered in the proliferation and dominance of democratic states or “the ‘third wave’ of democratization,” but this wave left little imprint on the Middle East.<sup>54</sup> According to Freedom House, the number of democratic states worldwide increased from 76 to 117 between 1990 and 1995.<sup>55</sup> During his State of the Union address, President George Bush proclaimed, “For more than 40 years, America and its allies held communism in check, and ensured that democracy would continue to exist. Today, with

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51. William I. Robinson, “Globalization, the World System, and ‘Democracy Promotion,’” 622.

52. Message to the Congress on America's Agenda for the Future, 6 February 1986, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, National Archives, [http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/search/speeches/speech\\_srch.html](http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/search/speeches/speech_srch.html) (accessed 31 July 2005).

53. William I. Robinson, “Globalization, the World System, and ‘Democracy Promotion,’” 652-653.

54. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, “Introduction,” in *The Global Divergence of Democracies*, ed. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), ix.

55. Ibid.

communism crumbling, our aim must be to ensure democracy's advance. To take the lead in forging peace and freedom's best hope – a great and growing commonwealth of free nations.”<sup>56</sup> Unlike the other regions of the world, no representative democracy – either liberal or electoral – exists in any Arab Middle Eastern state.<sup>57</sup> Most remain autocratic.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August of 1990 caused America additional consternation regarding its Middle East policy and its promotion of democracy in the region. During a hearing before the Subcommittee on Middle East Affairs in June of 1991, U.S. Representative and Chairman Lee Hamilton complained of Kuwaiti aversion to implementing democratic reforms after the U.S. had extended its services to help restore the ruling family's sovereignty. While Kuwait should have been grateful and receptive to American demands for democratic reforms, it remained obdurate to change.<sup>58</sup> Between 1992 and 1993, scholars such as Larry Diamond, senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution; Lisa Anderson, director of Columbia University's Middle East Institute; and Michael Hudson, a Georgetown University professor of international relations, briefed the Foreign Affairs Committee of the need to promote democracy in the Middle East. Mr. Diamond proposed, “If we are seriously interested in peace and stability in the Middle East, we must also begin to think much more seriously about how to encourage a long-term process of democratic change there as well.”<sup>59</sup>

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center towers marked another watershed in U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Calls for the promotion of democracy in the region intensified. In September 2002, President George H.W. Bush released his administration's National Security Strategy (NSS). John Lewis Gaddis, a Yale history professor, opined that Bush's NSS “...could represent the most sweeping shift in U.S.

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56. “Text of President Bush's State of the Union address Wednesday Night,” *Associated Press*, 1 February 1990, <http://www.nexis.com> (accessed 28 July 2005).

57. Diamond, “Introduction,” xii.

58. “Human Rights and Democracy in Kuwait,” U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington: 1991, 1-2.

59. U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. Committee on Foreign Affairs. 1991. Foreign Assistance Legislation For Fiscal Year 1992-1993, Hearings and round table discussion on the role of U.S. foreign policy and assistance in the promotion of democracy abroad before the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, one hundred second Congress first session, 388.

grand strategy since the beginning of the Cold War.”<sup>60</sup> Gaddis noted that, unlike previous administrations that also included the promotion of democracy in their NSS, Bush’s NSS was proactive (the U.S. will defend, preserve, and extend democracy) and specific (“free and open societies on every continent”). Also, the President publicly criticized friendly Arab states and pondered the logic of American preoccupation in defending the region’s stable, but autocratic regimes. In November 2003, President George W. Bush warned: “Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe ... As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export ... it would be reckless to accept the status quo.”<sup>61</sup> To oppose terrorism, the U.S. must build “lasting, democratic peace ... by supporting the rise of democracy, and the hope and progress that democracy brings, as the alternative to hatred and terror in the broader Middle East.”<sup>62</sup>

### **C. CURRENT ASSESSMENT OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

After September 11, the Bush administration initiated several programs to encourage democracy in the region. In June 2002, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell launched the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) to promote reform and democracy in the Muslim world. Specifically, MEPI is designed to encourage “expanded public space where democratic voices can be heard in the political process, the people have a choice in governance, and there is respect for the rule of law.”<sup>63</sup> Like NED, MEPI is restricted to the political realm. Since its inception, the funding for the initiative has

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60. John Lewis Gaddis, “A Grand Strategy of Transformation,” *Foreign Policy*, 1 November 2002, <http://nexus.com> (accessed 22 July 2005).

61. “Pres Bush’s address to National Endowment for Democracy, November 2003,” Institute of Communications Studies, University of Leeds, UK, <http://ics.leed.ac.uk/papers/vp01.cfm?outfit=pmt&requesttimeout=500&folder=339&paper=939> (accessed 13 March 2005).

62. “U.S., World Safer Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Bush Says,” United States Consulate Mumbai-India, 12 July 2004, <http://usembassy.state.gov/mumbai/wwwwashnews2090.html> (accessed 11 March 2005).

63. Middle East Partnership Initiative, U.S. Department of State, <http://mepi.state.gov/mepi/> (accessed 20 March 2005).

increased from 29 million dollars to 75 million dollars.<sup>64</sup> In March 2002, the Middle East Radio Network was created.<sup>65</sup> Bush announced that the network will ensure that accurate information from an American perspective is available to the region to help mitigate misunderstandings of American actions and policies.<sup>66</sup>

So far, the results have been mixed. In February 2005, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak called for an amendment to article 76 of the constitution to allow for multiple candidates and parties to participate in presidential elections. Shortly thereafter, his security forces arrested, beat, and intimidated vocal opponents – most notably former parliamentary member Ayman Nur.<sup>67</sup> In September 2005, President Hosni Mubarak won his fifth six-year term with 88.6 percent of the votes in Egypt's first presidential elections. Among the irregularities noted, some registered voters claim that, when they reported to the voting booth, their names were not listed and they were turned away.<sup>68</sup> In Jordan, King Abdallah II has made little progress on reform. Neil Hicks, Director of Human Rights First's Special Initiative on the Middle East, commented that Jordan's embrace of liberal reforms is an illusion; in actuality, Jordan has resisted concrete democratic reforms.<sup>69</sup> From February to April of 2005, Saudi Arabia held their first municipal elections for half of the 178 municipal council positions.<sup>70</sup> Women were not allowed to participate. In fact, some maintain that Saudi women live in a state of "gender

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64. Jeremy M. Sharp, "U.S. Foreign Assistance to the Middle East: Historical Background, Recent Trends, and the FY2006 Request," p.3, Congressional Research Service: Library of Congress, RL3226013 (June 2005), <http://www.usembassy.it/pdf/other/RL32260.pdf> (accessed 5 September 2005).

65. Robin Brown, "Spinning the War: Political Communications, Information Operations and Public Diplomacy in the War on Terrorism," in *War and the Media*, ed. Daya Kishan Thussu and Des Freedman (New Dehli: Vistaar Publications, 2003), 87-100.

66. "New Middle East Radio Network on Air" Voice of America, <http://www.voa.gov/index.cfm?tableName=tblPressReleases&articleID=10050&sectiontitle=Press%20Releases> (accessed 19 April 2005).

67. "Letter to President Hosni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt," *Human Rights Watch*, 4 February 2005, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/02/03/egypt10118.htm> (accessed 18 March 2005).

68. "Egyptian elections: Your views," *BBC News*, 14 September 2005, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking\\_point/4166000.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking_point/4166000.stm) (accessed 17 September 2005).

69. "Human Rights Defenders in Jordan: Government Undoing a Decade of Reform," Human Rights First: Middle East Initiative, [http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/middle\\_east/jordan/hrd\\_jordan.htm](http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/middle_east/jordan/hrd_jordan.htm) (accessed 18 March 2005).

70. Delinda C. Hanley, "Municipal Election Results Surprise Saudi Arabian Voters," *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, vol. 24, no. 3, 33.

apartheid.”<sup>71</sup> On March 11, 2002, in Mecca, 15 girls died in a fire because Saudi Arabia’s religious police refused to let the girls leave the burning school without their *hijab* and *abaya*. Witnesses claimed the police physically prevented the girls from exiting the building because they did not have on their *abaya*.<sup>72</sup>

In *Uncharted Journey*, the authors argue that one of the biggest challenges America faces in its promotion of democracy in the Middle East is that it lacks a coherent strategy based on realistic assessments of regional circumstances. Following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center towers, America felt compelled to respond. Democracy promotion formed a soft and long term approach to complement its hard or military responses in Afghanistan and Iraq. In its haste, it overlooked the nature of the challenges for democratization in the region.

American policy makers approached the Middle East as they had other regions including the former communist countries. In fact, the majority of those promoting democracy in the region are not Middle East experts and are inclined to over-generalize, treating the region as a monolithic entity and making assumptions divorced from regional realities.<sup>73</sup> For instance, in the former communist region democracy was readily embraced because it represented the only viable alternative to the failed ideology of communism, and the U.S. voice viewed as credible since it was untainted by any scandal of internal meddling. Based on the assumption that democracy is intrinsically universal and has mass appeal, these experts expected the Middle East to embrace democracy and America’s support as enthusiastically as had the former communist countries. These experts failed to appreciate that a more attractive and competing mass ideology to democracy – political Islam – exists, in varying degrees, in all Arab states.<sup>74</sup> Making matters worse, these experts and policy makers have not reached a consensus on a plan of

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71. Rita Henley Jensen, “Saudi Women Push Dialogue on Rights,” *Women’s E-News*, 8 March 2005, <http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/2213/context/archive> (accessed 18 March 2005).

72. “Saudi Police ‘Stopped’ Fire Rescue,” *BBC News*, 15 March 2002, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/1874471.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/1874471.stm) (accessed 18 March 2005).

73. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway, “The New Democracy Imperative,” in *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, ed. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 10.

74. *Ibid.*, 7.



approach. Consequently, American democracy promotion is uncoordinated, multipronged, and lacking of a strategic framework. In other words, American democracy promotion in the Middle East is in a state of flux.<sup>75</sup>

In the interim, policy makers have promoted civil society, women's rights and economic reform as makeshift determinants for democracy. Yet, these measures are superficial and do not necessarily lead to democracy. Arab states, adept at ruling by divide and conquer, have used foreign promotion of civil society campaigns as extensions of their policies and co-opted these organizations. In Egypt, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) representatives work in partnership with the government in deciding which nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) the Egyptian government will tolerate to determine which the U.S. should support. The NGOs generally supported are those that pose no threat to the state; contribute practical services which the state cannot or do not provide (i.e. small loans for women and education); and lack the potential for mass mobilization and appeal (i.e. isolated pro-democracy elites). The promotion and subsequent proliferation of civil societies have created fragmentation which serves the states' interests. Egypt has an estimated 14,000 NGOs which thwarts the formation of concerted and sustained pressure against the state.<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, the promotion of women's rights does not represent a challenge to states. Such reforms on gender issues are easily absorbed without changing the nature of the state. In fact, incorporating these reforms helps states to create a veneer of political liberalization which they can use to improve their international or regional image. Regardless, Britain and the United States were democracies long before women were given the right to vote and were welcomed into the labor force.<sup>77</sup> Encouraging Arab states

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75. Thomas Carothers, "Choosing a Strategy," in *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, ed. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 207.

76. Amy Hawthorne, "Is Civil Society the Answer?" in *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, ed. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 94.

77. Marina Ottaway, "The Limits of Women's Rights," in *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, ed. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 121.

to increase the number of female representatives in parliaments that lack authority and power is more symbolic than real.<sup>78</sup>

Neither does economic prosperity appear to be necessary for democratization. Most states recognize the need for economic reform and accept certain aspects of Western (World Bank or International Monetary Fund (IMF)) recommendations. For example, Syria, Iraq and Algeria initiated IMF prescribed stabilization measures, which involve fiscal reforms, reduction of government expenditures, and curbing inflation, even as they rebuffed American associated financial institutions.<sup>79</sup> These states looked to Singapore as an example of a country that enjoyed economic success without democracy.<sup>80</sup> Other IMF and World Bank recommendations are more contentious. For instance, privatization and structural adjustment threaten Arab states' monopoly of the economy on which their survival hinges. Using their monopoly on the economy, states dole out financial favors to loyal clients, punish opponents, and strengthen their internal security organizations to control and to monitor the population. So, while states may implement economic reform measures, they are unlikely to willingly commit political suicide – reforms that threaten the existent power distribution are discarded or perverted (i.e. reserving private companies for tribal members or loyal clients).

Meanwhile, American democracy advocates have been reluctant to take actions that are directly conducive to democracy. American efforts fail to incorporate Islamists, to encourage the mass mobilization of political groups, or to challenge the regimes' power structure, all of which are essential for democratization. Islamists, who enjoy popular support, are characterized indiscriminately as illiberal threats, terrorist sympathizers, or terrorists.<sup>81</sup> States keen to stunt the mobilization of any formidable opponent capitalize on Western fears and repress these Islamist groups. Yet, Islamists may represent the most credible group to organize and mobilize broad-based constituents

78. Marina Ottaway, "The Limits of Women's Rights," 115-129.

79. Eva Bellin, "The Political-Economic Conundrum," in *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, ed. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 136.

80. Ibid., 138.

81. Graham Fuller, "Islamists and Democracy," in *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, ed. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 37-55.

to pressure the state to change.<sup>82</sup> Democratization requires local political organizations capable of massing a force willing to engage in sustained engagement against the state, for external foreign pressure alone is insufficient to coerce the state to change.<sup>83</sup> It is internal pressure that compels states to change the existing power distribution. Yet, American promotion efforts reflect an aversion to altering the states' power distribution for fear of state collapse. Rather, America prefers a gradualist approach, which entails skirting the issue, lauding fig leaf reforms and avoiding direct confrontations with Arab states. In the end, these tactics miss the mark and do not lead to democratization but the preservation of the status quo.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

America's lack of experience in promoting democracy in the region and the difficulty in standardizing the meaning of democracy and democracy promotion are factors that America can overcome – that is, these factors, although restrictive, are not indicative of inevitable failure. Still, current American promotion of democracy in the Middle East has handicaps. A tradition of inconsistent foreign policies has mired its credibility and is among the most relevant. The authors of *Uncharted Journey* cite the lack of a coherent strategy as another significant shortcoming. Regardless, the success or the failure of America's efforts is not automatic or predetermined. What is relatively certain, however, is that a foreign policy based on promoting democracy inevitably leads to debate, given that the term itself is a “contested concept.” These debates are essentially frame contests to determine whose interpretation of “democracy” will prevail. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework and expands on the concepts of frame contests and internal pressure for democratization.

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82. Marina Ottoway, “The Missing Constituency for Democratic Reform,” in *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, ed. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottoway (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 151-170.

83. *Ibid.*, 156.

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### **III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY**

As discussed in the previous chapter, internal pressure for democratization is crucial. Internal pressure may come in the form of political parties, oppositional groups, social movements, or mass protests. I argue that, contrary to a theory equating promotion of a policy with reforms in the same direction, advocacy of a policy can have the reverse effect, an outcome particularly relevant for Arab states. Specifically, I argue that American promotion of democracy in the Middle East is not likely to succeed because American efforts have caused opposing movements to emerge, detracting from the internal pressure necessary to compel the state to expand the political space. In framing democracy as inherently American, a frame contest or a struggle of meaning has developed which has polarized discourse on the subject. This result serves neither to educate the people about democracy, nor motivate them to act against the state (internal pressure), but rather promotes the inadvertent defense of the state and the status quo by opposing American demands for change. In other words, the understanding of democracy becomes clouded as democracy is distorted. With the state's threat-perception of the internal opposition decreased, domestic policy makers can confidently withstand external pressures for substantial changes, compromising instead through cosmetic liberalization measures. In the end, the status quo is maintained.

In this study, I look at the speech expressed on al Jazeera, which is a platform or a public sphere for political discussion. When that speech reflects a consensus of opinion, it can then serve as a source of internal pressure. Inversely, a lack of consensus over democracy may indicate a lack of pressure on the states. The speech reflected on al Jazeera is associated with opposing movements, employing competing frames favorable or unfavorable to "American democracy." In this chapter, I present the theoretical concepts underlining my argument. I look at opposing movement dynamics, frame contests, and the importance of al Jazeera and its role as a communication platform. I conclude with the study's methodology. In the following chapter, I present and analyze the findings of my research.

## A. DYNAMICS OF OPPOSING MOVEMENTS

Social movement theory is an effective tool to understand Arab reaction to the U.S. promotion campaign. To understand this reaction requires an understanding of the interplay between the environment, individual motivation, group motivation, resources, and actions. In other words, what is needed is a theory that analyzes group reactions along the various dimensions that may impact those responses. Social movement theory is a multi-dimensional approach that examines these numerous layers in isolation as well as through interactions. While American promotion of democracy is not in actuality a social movement, it shares the same functions and behaves similarly to a social movement. As such, the opposing movement dynamics that ensue are similar to those of traditional opposing movements interactions detailed in social movement theory. Thus, social movement theory is an appropriate tool to interpret this study's data. In this section, I begin by exploring the basic characteristics, motivations, and functions of social movements and opposing movements. I then discuss the dynamics of these dyads, followed by an outline of why American efforts are perceived as a social movement. Highlighted are some of its characteristics (i.e. resource mobilization structure). Finally, I offer evidence of the perception that the U.S. is a social movement by reviewing some opposing movements' initial reactions.

While social movements around the world may differ in details, they share some basic characteristics and motivations. Social movements exist at the national and transnational level and are "collective challenges [actions] by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities."<sup>84</sup> Transnational movements are groups or organizations from more than one country that coordinate their actions for a common cause.<sup>85</sup> Social movements are rational, strategic, and organized endeavors that emerge as a result of structural changes. Structural changes or political opportunities are alterations within the operational environment that create

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84. David S. Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg, "Movements, Countermovements, and the Structure of Political Opportunity," in *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 101, no. 6 (May 1996), 1631.

85. Dieter Rucht, "The Transnationalization of Social Movements: Trends, Causes, Problems," in *Social Movements in a Globalizing World*, ed. Donatella della Porta, Hanspeter Kriesi, and Dieter Rucht (New York: St. Martins Press, Inc., 1999), 209.

openings for collective action by increasing or decreasing individuals' or groups' expectations of their actions' efficacy.<sup>86</sup> This structure consists of all external dynamics outside of the group's immediate control which they may leverage to their advantage. Some examples of the political opportunity structure include changes within the international community, weakening of the state or regime, splits within the political elite, increase in crime, and economic depression or recession. Essentially, these changes present movement entrepreneurs with a political opportunity or motivation for action.

Social movements also behave similarly – that is, they have the same fundamental function, which is primarily to persuade the state. What often differentiates social movements, however, are their available means for action or their resource mobilization structure. Specifically, social movements seek to coerce, persuade and cajole the public, elites, authorities, and external interests to support their efforts.<sup>87</sup> To do this, social movements first mobilize resources. Movements' mobilizing structures consist of formal and informal institutions through which groups associate, socialize, organize, and partake in collective actions. Mobilization is facilitated when an adversarial force or movement is perceived to be reaching its goals, a highly centralized organizational structure exists, and a “singular target of conflict” – such as war - galvanizes the population.<sup>88</sup> Social movements are not formed ad hoc or spontaneously. Movements utilize existing societal structures to recruit members and resources for collective actions. Existing institutions such as the media, mosques, social clubs, and personal networks form the nexus of mobilizing resources.

Movements in an issue field or counter movements share similar characteristics, motivations and functions. Just as social movements do not arise in a vacuum; neither does the movement field remain uncontested. Politically significant social movements spawn favorable conditions for opposing movement formation.<sup>89</sup> Counter movements

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86. Aldon D. Morris, “Reflections on Social Movement Theory: Criticism and Proposals” in *Contemporary Sociology*, vol. 29, no. 3 (May 2000), 446.

87. Mayer N. Zald and Bert Useem, “Movement and Countermovement Interaction: Mobilization, Tactics, and State Involvement,” in *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*, ed. Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987), 247-272.

88. Ibid., 252-260.

89. Ibid, 247.

resemble their opponents and may have common concerns, but these groups of individuals and organizations compete to influence the state, mass media, and the public to implement their championed policy or political changes.<sup>90</sup> Mass media coverage may encourage the development of opposing movements because journalists try to capture alternative sentiments to movement claims.<sup>91</sup>

Thus, movements and opposing movements do not function in separate fields, but rather interact; the resulting interaction has distinct characteristics. Essentially, movements create the conditions ripe for opposing movement formation by advocating societal changes that attack the interests of some and raise their costs, while benefiting others. Consequently, the changes advocated by movements lead to new grievances which opposing movement entrepreneurs use to define their own goals and positions. Movements have a demonstrative effect and embolden rival movement formation to compete for priority and influence society along their own favored lines. Movement and opposing movement interaction affect both parties since their interaction alters the operational environment or the political opportunity structure. Movement and counter movements use each other as visible signs of threat to mobilize supporters and keep their agenda relevant and invigorated.<sup>92</sup> Regardless, this does not mean that opposing movements can form only once a movement emerges. Opposing movements can emerge at any time to advocate for a particular interest upon perception that a window of opportunity has opened. Importantly, as actors from both movements focus on reacting to their opponents, the ensuing dynamic can inadvertently lead to a defense of the status quo rather than making new demands of the state.<sup>93</sup> In the U.S. movement-opposing movement dynamics have been observed over issues such as abortion, women's rights, gay rights, and gun control. In the Middle East, this dynamic has been observed between the Egyptian government and the Muslim Brotherhood and between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority.

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90. David S. Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg, "Movements and Countermovements," 1632.

91. Ibid., 1642.

92. Ibid., 1651-1652.

93. Charles, Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1978).



The U.S.'s promotion efforts are perceived as a social movement with noticeable features. In other words, the Middle East experiences American actions in the region as part of a social movement to fundamentally change their society. While American democracy promotion is not, strictly speaking, a social movement, the effect of the U.S. democracy campaign and the response to it parallel the interactions of movements within an issue field. Clearly, American democracy promotion is fundamentally different from social movements such as Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood, or the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. While these movements emerged from domestic non-state sources, "American democracy" is international and the product of the U.S. government. To the region, America's actions and rhetoric are consistent with those of a social movement, for it seeks to fundamentally transform the societal and political fabric of the states through indirect persuasion and public relations.<sup>94</sup> President Bush has reiterated that the U.S. is engaged in a campaign against the Middle East on numerous occasions. He has warned that the Middle East needs to reform or become a main supplier of international violence and terrorism.<sup>95</sup> The President continues to reiterate America's commitment to wage a "broad and sustained campaign" to enhance American security and destroy terrorism.<sup>96</sup> From Middle Easterners' perspective, America, armed with financial and mobilizational resources superior to the states in the region themselves, represents a strong movement geared toward altering the cultural and the historical makeup of society. Alternatively, America is advocating an idea that permeates all facets of the society – social, political, economic. Yet, democracy is equivocal, and through the eyes of the objects of this advocacy, America is depriving Arabs of their right to freely define for themselves what democracy means. As an Egyptian politician expressed, "We accept 99% of the framework of democracy and you keep pushing us to accept the bad 1%! Americans are promoting homosexuality, free sex, things which go to the very roots

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94. Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 161.

95. "President Address the Nation," *The White House*, 7 September 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/09/20030907-1.html>, and "President Bush Discusses Importance of Democracy in Middle East," *The White House*, 4 February 2004, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/02/20040204-4.html> (accessed 19 March 2005).

96. Alan Elsner, "Bush Vows Broad, Sweeping, Sustained Campaign," *Reuters*, 15 September 2001, <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines01/0915-01.htm> (accessed 20 March 2005).

of human society and are not even accepted by everyone in America. And they want us to start with it.”<sup>97</sup>

The American ability to engage in this campaign is well resourced. For instance, America has considerable influence on international organizations such as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank that already advocate democracy, whether directly or implicitly through their charter. America also has international agencies like the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO); Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL); and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) whose explicit missions are to advance American foreign policy. Additionally, America has access to networks of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) – the most prominent of which are the National Endowment for Democracy (and its subordinate organizations) and Freedom House. Middle Eastern NGOs can also be exploited. For example, in 2002, the American embassy in Cairo provided six Egyptian NGOs a million dollars to support pro-democracy related activities.<sup>98</sup> President Bush can also employ his diplomatic networks to tap into ally resources, but as the sole super-power and with a Gross National Product (GNP) of almost eleven trillion USD – the largest in the world – whatever is not readily available can be purchased.<sup>99</sup> The media is also a key resource that President Bush uses to advance his administration’s democracy promotion. Unlike regular movement actors, the President of the United States is guaranteed media coverage whenever he speaks.<sup>100</sup> As a public relations measure, the Bush administration launched the Middle East Radio Network or al Hura to broadcast

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97. Carrie Wickham, “The Problem with Coercive Democractization: The Islamist Response to the U.S. Democracy Reform Initiative,” *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2004), 7.

98. Gamal Essam El-Din, “US Throws \$1 Million Into the Fray,” *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 733 (10-16 March 2005), <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/733/eg2.htm> (accessed 20 March 2005).

99. CIA World Fact Book, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/us.html#Econ> (accessed 20 March 2005).

100. Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power in the Global Information Age*, (New York: Routledge, 2004).

American points of view.<sup>101</sup> These are just some of the organizations and resources at the disposal of the U.S. to persuade Arab states to alter their domestic policies.

As would be expected, given traditional counter movement dynamics, American democracy promotion has spurred oppositional reactions, since the U.S. campaign to influence and set priorities conflicts directly with national efforts to influence Arabs' own states. Instead of domestically-generated pressures for change, the U.S. is externally attempting to effect internal changes within sovereign polities through its public campaign. In other words, American demands are competing with indigenous groups' own perceived legitimate right to demand changes from the state, undermining local movements' prerogative to set their agenda. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan may place changes in education or social affairs as more important than liberal democracy, but find that they now must compete with American demands for priority to influence the state to implement these preferences. Eventually, indigenous groups shift their attention from making demands of the state to countering American pressure – this inadvertent result leads to the defense of the status quo.

Additionally, opposing movements have responded to American pressure by reassessing their identities to facilitate future mobilization. President Bush's speeches are viewed as unjustly targeting the region. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia declared that the Muslim world is treated with disrespect and not as equals among the states of the international system, but rather as children in need of supervision and reprimand. To add insult to this mistreatment, Muslims are blanketed as terrorists and enemies, he stated.<sup>102</sup> This sense has caused Middle Easterners to defensively reassess their identity as well as re-evaluate "the other," the U.S. An Egyptian politician explained, "You want me to be exactly like you. If I try to do this, I will end up a disfigured human being. I won't know how to be like you and remain myself. You are

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101. Robin Brown, "Spinning the War: Political Communications, Information Operations and Public Diplomacy in the War on Terrorism" in *War and the Media*, ed. Daya Kishan Thussu and Des Freedman (New Dehli: Vistaar Publications, 2003), 87-100, and "New Middle East Radio Network on Air" Voice of America, <http://www.voa.gov/index.cfm?tableName=tblPressReleases&articleID=10050&sectiontitle=Press%20Rel%20eases> (accessed 19 April 2005).

102. Speech by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad to the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference, Putrajaya, Malaysia, [http://www.adl.org/Anti\\_semitism/malaysian.asp](http://www.adl.org/Anti_semitism/malaysian.asp) (accessed 19 March 2005).

Western, you have your own culture, your own history. I am Middle Eastern. I don't ask you to become Egyptian."<sup>103</sup> This examination is occurring through discourse because, through communication, identities, which are relational, are created, reinforced, or amended. In other words, verbal communication is subject to the audience's interpretation, which is bound by the interpreter's sense of identity, norms, and context. Eventually, particular views become established and characteristic of an identity. For instance, the head of the Arab American Institute, James Zogby, concluded through his interviews that the Middle East's opposition to the U.S. "...defines almost existentially their sense of who they are."<sup>104</sup> The counter movement approach can explain this development. Established identities become reference points to judge actions and gauge acceptable behavior. Once opposing movement actors are prepared to build on their sense of identity to influence others, they engage in strategic framing.

## **B. FRAME CONTESTS**

The concept of frame contests is an integral aspect of social movement theory. While the previous section helped explain individual and group motivation for action or reaction, the concept of frame contests explains the preliminary act that precedes concrete collective action. Put differently, frame contests are actions taken to mobilize individuals, groups, etc. to think and act collectively. Collective action can conceptually be viewed as a continuum of movement activities with identity assessment at one end of the spectrum and public demonstrations or protests at the other extreme. Frame contests fall in the middle of this continuum. In this section, I first define the basic characteristics of frames , then explain the purpose of frames, followed by exploring why certain frames work or resonate with audiences while others do not, and close with a discussion on why frame contests occur.

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103. Carrie Wickham, "The Problem with Coercive Democratization," 7.

104. Sarah El Deeb, "A Rare Arab Opinion Poll Says Arabs Dislike America but Not Democracy," *Associated Press*, 30 October 2002, <http://www.aaiusa.org/news/aainews103102.htm> (accessed 19 March 2005).

The word “frame” is a rather common term, but in social movement theory it has a set definition and characteristics. Frames are “schemata of interpretation.”<sup>105</sup> It is the interpretive formula of an event and explains the key elements of what is going on, who bears responsibility and what should be done.<sup>106</sup> Framing is the process movement entrepreneurs use to develop frames or produce meanings.<sup>107</sup> These meanings are social by-products of interactions, which sometimes are confrontational and other times not, between various actors engaged in its production. Thus, framing is interactive and responds to internal and external cues to produce an understanding of reality – frame. Framing is a cognitive, active and conscious process that involves calculating what means is available to achieve a predetermined end. Emotions play a role as movement activists strategically seek to pinpoint and accentuate the most emotive interpretations that lead people to react either through action or antipathy towards their opponents. Movement entrepreneurs use frames to target a broad range of different types of audiences such as the media, the public, state elites, etc. for effect.

Clearly, frames serve multiple purposes. Opposing movements compete using frames, which enable movement actors to distinguish themselves from competing groups and to advertise their position or particular world views. Still, in the absence of a common frame or understanding, collective action is unlikely, since frames provide individuals and groups the common vector needed to perform as a unit.<sup>108</sup> Frames reinforce group cohesion and improve expectations of success. In other words, frames can create opportunities for action. Frames create this opportunity by employing emotive, cultural, or historical symbols that incite strong emotional reactions and demands for action.<sup>109</sup> Movement actors try to formulate their frames in such a way that a reasonable person cannot simply dismiss their demands as an ephemeral nuisance. For instance, in

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105. David Snow, E. Burke Rochford, Jr., Steven K. Worden and Robert D. Benford, “Frame Alignment Process, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” *American Sociological Review*, vol. 51, no. 4 (August 1986), 464.

106. *Ibid.*, 465.

107. Robert D. Benford, “An Insider’s Critique of the Social Movement Framing Perspective,” *Social Inquiry*, vol. 67, no. 4 (November 1997), 410.

108. David Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Process,” 464.

109. Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 107.

1992, Saudi religious scholars presented a statement to the King, using an Islamist frame, which criticized the regime and its policies. Unlike previous reform movements using alternate frames, the Saudi regime, which bases its legitimacy on religion, could not counter or ignore an Islamist frame. Using this frame, Saudi Islamist movements created an opportunity and liberalized the political space for Saudis to discuss politics and religion. Scholars have commented that only an Islamist frame could have extracted such concessions from the Saudi regime.<sup>110</sup>

Not all frames work; frames that influence behavior do so because they resonate with the targeted audience. Movement entrepreneurs seek to produce collective action frames that resonate. Collective action frames are interpretations of an event in such a way that certain aspects are accentuated and elevated to justify the need for action. To justify action, movement entrepreneurs highlight why the event is different from other similar events; why the event warrants an escalation of concern; and why the event is an issue of justice and not simply one of unfortunate circumstances.<sup>111</sup> So, in order for these frames to resonate, they must foster a harmonious understanding or interpretation of events.<sup>112</sup> Because multiple individual interpretations and beliefs coexist, consensus on shared meanings is improbable and tenuous. Still, complementary understanding is the minimum requirement. This minimum requirement is likely if frames are perceived as credible and salient – that is, frame success or resonance is determined by its credibility and salience.<sup>113</sup>

Credibility is crucial for social movements and their associated frames. Credibility is gained through consistency between articulated frames and actions. Had the

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110. Gwenn Okruhlik, "Making Conversation Permissible: Islamism and Reform in Saudi Arabia," in *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, ed. Quintan Wiktorowicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 261.

111. Robert Benford and David A. Snow, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, ed. Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 137.

112. Rhys H. Williams and Timothy J. Kubal, "Movement and Frames and the Cultural Environment: Resonance, Failure, and the Boundaries of the Legitimate," *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, vol. 21, 229.

113. Robert D. Benford and David Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2000, vol. 26, 619-622. The next paragraphs on credibility and salience are based on the subcategories outlined in Benford and Snow's overview.

American civil rights movement resorted to violent means to achieve its objective, it would have lost credibility through the undermining of its non-violent frame, which resonated powerfully. Empirical evidence is another important aspect. Movement activists must suggest evidence in support of their frames that are not necessarily conclusive or factual, but are plausible to some segment of society. For instance, irrespective of evidence, some Australian Muslims believe that the U.S. staged and orchestrated the September 11 attacks so that Americans could have “a license to go into Islamic countries.”<sup>114</sup> Although this perspective is flawed, in light of increased American presence and engagement in the Middle East, to some it is conceivable. Social movement articulators are also central for strengthening groups’ credibility. Articulators who have expertise or are considered authorities in fields are sought to bolster the social movement’s credibility. Anti-Vietnam War activists actively sought war veterans to condemn the fighting and serve as movement spokespersons.<sup>115</sup> The underlying assumption being that war veterans are the best qualified to judge the utility or morality of war and thereby qualify as authority figures. Additionally, a war veteran can hardly be accused of being unpatriotic for opposing a war; this makes it more difficult for opponents to use un-American frames to counter and vilify movements backed by these spokespersons.

Like credibility, salience is fundamental for frame resonance. Salience is achieved by ensuring that frames are central to the targeted audiences. Frames must be relevant to the individuals’ lives. Frames that do not show how problems or situations impact the individuals’ beliefs, values, or ideas will likely be ignored. For instance, Sierra Club (environmental group) activists trying to recruit inner city dwellers will likely face difficulties. Likewise, movement activists’ frames must be grounded in reality. Following Iraq’s invasion and expulsion from Kuwait, there were campaigns to pressure the Kuwaiti government to implement democratic reforms such as recognizing women’s rights. These campaigns, however, were ill timed and ignored the ground truth. A Kuwaiti asked,

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114. Mark Dunn, “Muslims think US behind September 11,” *Herald Sun*, 26 July 2005, [http://www.heraldsun.news.com.au/common/story\\_page/0,5478,16048772%255E662,00.html](http://www.heraldsun.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5478,16048772%255E662,00.html) (accessed 13 August 2005).

115. “Vietnam Veterans Against John Kerry,” <http://vikingphoenix.com/e2004/vietnamvetsagainstkerry.htm> (accessed 13 August 2005).

“How can you ask me to spend my time talking about women driving ... when last week my daughter was raped by the Iraqis?”<sup>116</sup> Lastly, narrative fidelity or cultural resonance indicates the tailoring of messages and perspectives to fit the targeted audience’s cultural sensitivities, minimizing counterproductive expressions and increasing salience.<sup>117</sup>

Frame contests occur because of the marketplace of ideas. In this market, multiple interpretations of reality exist and all frames, no matter how resonant, are susceptible to debate or may spur frame contests. Frame contests are competitive struggles between movement activists and their opponents for frame supremacy. These opponents may be opposing movements that developed specifically to challenge the movement; bystanders who disagree with the current frame; and or the media. These opponents attack the movement’s frame to undercut its reasoning and conclusions.<sup>118</sup> Competition over meaning occurs in the presence of alternate frames; movement actors cannot simply impose their own frames on others. Individuals are capable of independent reasoning and do not have to embrace the frames presented. In light of this fact, movements make adjustments following attacks of their frame and attempt to strengthen their frames while weakening those of their opponents.

### **C. AL JAZEERA: ITS IMPORTANCE AND ROLE AS A PUBLIC SPHERE**

As mentioned in the first section, American policy makers have made considerable investments in media resources to persuade Middle Eastern states and people to change. The media is one of the U.S. government’s primary resource mobilization tools to effect democratic change in the Arab world. Specifically, American emphasis on the use of satellite television stations (al Hura) to broadcast its messages set the stage for opposing movement dynamics within this field (satellite television). Consequently, to observe how the region is reacting to American demands, I focused on analyzing the discussions reflected on al Jazeera satellite television station because it is a

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116. Jarold B. Manheim, “Managing Kuwait’s Image,” in *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, ed. W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1994), 139.

117. Rhys H. Williams, “From the ‘Beloved Community’ to ‘Family Values:’ Religious Language, Symbolic Repertoires, and Democratic Culture,” in *Social Movements: Identity, Culture, and the State*, ed. David S. Meyer, Nancy Whittier, and Belinda Robnett (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 264.

118. Rhys H. Williams, “From the ‘Beloved Community,’” 626.



site where opposing movement dynamics are evident. In this section, I first discuss the importance of the media for social movements; then move to the role of the media as a public sphere; followed by the role of the public sphere as a source of internal pressure; and then to how the media creates pressure by looking at agenda-setting effects. After, I defend my choice of al Jazeera by providing background information on the station, and end by responding to possible criticisms of using al Jazeera as a platform to observe Arab reactions.

For social movement activists, the media is an important scaffold for frame contests. The media is where movement entrepreneurs, various interest groups, individuals, etc. present and defend their world views in the hope of swaying the public and the state.<sup>119</sup> Though there are other social institutions that impact popular opinion and discussions, such as mosques, movement activists try to access and use the media because it is a communication institution with broad reach. Television, in particular, has revolutionized movement tactics.<sup>120</sup> Social movements use television coverage as a force multiplier and enabler – that is, television helps activists educate, recruit, and mobilize on a grand scale.<sup>121</sup> Satellite television has expanded the media's range as well as broadened social movements' reach further.

Theoretically, the media's role is that of a public sphere. Jurgen Habermas posited that in its ideal, the media is an important communicative element of the public sphere, a platform for different expressions and political debates. As societies modernized and their populations expanded demographically and territorially, the media became a key institution to facilitate communication across geographically separated public spheres. A public sphere is a space where political and rational debates or discussions on issues of collective concern take place independent of the state – it serves to mediate between civil society and state.<sup>122</sup> Given the media's significance, Habermas identified the ideal media model as apolitical, impartial and independent of the state. The media is the “fourth

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119. Michael Gurevitch and Mark R. Levy, ed., *Mass Communication Review Yearbook*, vol. 5, (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985), 19.

120. Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 115.

121. William A. Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld, “Movements and Media as Interacting Systems,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 528 (July 1993), 116.

122. Jurgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, (New Baskerville: MIT Press, 1996), 359-379.

branch” and serves as guardian of democracy through its checks and counterbalance of the other three branches and representation of the people. In Habermas’ view, “...the mass media ought to understand themselves as the mandatary of an enlightened public ... like the judiciary, they ought to preserve their independence from political and social pressure.”<sup>123</sup>

Though Habermas’ comments pertained specifically to democracies, they are also applicable for authoritarian states. Marc Lynch extended Habermas’ concept to include the Middle East. The emergence of satellite television technology has facilitated the creation of transnational communication platforms or alternate public spheres which are beyond the states’ control. While al Jazeera is far from Habermas’ ideal media, it offers its viewers and participants a space for debates and discussions on topics of collective concern such as high unemployment, repressive regimes, and need for reform. The views expressed on al Jazeera may not necessarily represent the people or the “Arab street’s” opinions, but the discourse has been accepted as the de facto Arab voice in the absence of alternatives. As such, this study analyzes the different expressions reflected on al Jazeera.

Theoretically, the media or public sphere can serve as a source of internal pressure against the states to entice them to change and even democratize. Kai Hafez suggests that due to the lack of political parties and familiarity with democracy in the Middle East, al Jazeera could serve as an avant-garde for democracy or an intermediary between society and the state. Hafez argues that conventional democratic transformation theory does not adequately address the nature of transnational satellite television in the Arab world. Traditional democratic transformation theory focused on government controlled, domestic-based media, where mass media is considered important but not an avant-garde to democratization. Transnational satellite television stations have altered the equation – these stations are not nation-based and some, like al Jazeera, are independent of state control. Al Jazeera has served as a mouthpiece or a platform for public expression against the states. Consequently, it has served as a mediator between the Arab societies and the

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123. Jurgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 378.

states, a role that was previously reserved for political groups or movements in the democratization process.<sup>124</sup>

Lynch showed that the discourse reflected on satellite television can transcend the rhetorical and lead to action when popular consensus exists. This consensus serves as the internal pressure customarily associated with group activities. The public, states and social activists monitor al Jazeera as a feedback mechanism, and in so doing eventually adjust their behavior to conform to the norms reflected on the television in order to avoid perceived or presumed costs. For instance, continuous Arab media coverage of Iraqi citizens' desperate plight in the late 1990s placed the issue on the agenda and confined states' policy options. These discourses mattered because they altered people's perception of what was acceptable, and in time this perception altered their behavior. This transformation or internalization of the discourse occurred not only at the individual level, but also at the state level.

For states, behavioral adjustments began with adopting the rhetoric of the consensus for strategic interests, then evolves to internalizing that rhetoric through consistent use, and finally to aligning rhetoric with actions.<sup>125</sup> The consensus set the parameter of acceptable or tolerable behavior as well as delineated the retributions for aberrations.<sup>126</sup> Unwittingly, states adopting the language of the popular consensus facilitated the consolidation of that rhetoric by reinforcing its perpetuation which limited their political options.<sup>127</sup> In the end, while states in the Middle East lack the institutional structure for society to hold states accountable, satellite television stations have served as an effective intermediary or public sphere to indirectly influence states' behavior. Backed by a consensus of popular opinion, civil societies in Jordan, Syria and Egypt mobilized and conducted rallies, protests or pencil collection drives in support of Iraqi civilians. In 2000, Arab states disregarded the United Nations ban on civilian flights to Baghdad and

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124. Kai Hafez, "Arab Satellite Broadcasting: An Alternative to Political Parties?" <http://www2.kommunikationswissenschaft-erfurt.de/uploads/Cambridge-Speech.pdf> (accessed 17 September 2005).

125. Marc Lynch, "Beyond the Arab Street: Iraq and the Arab Public Sphere," *Politics & Society*, vol. 31, no.1 (March 2003), 69.

126. Ibid., 72.

127. Ibid.

began making regular deliveries of humanitarian aid to Iraq. By 2002, civilian flights to Baghdad became the norm.

The media serves as a source of internal pressure because of its agenda-setting effects. As Lynch's example showed, fundamental to the media's ability to exert internal pressure is its ability to place an issue on the agenda for discussion. Shanto Iyengar studied the agenda-setting effects of television coverage on the American public. He found that there is a positive correlation between the amount of television coverage dedicated to a particular issue and the prioritization level viewers' attached to that issue as a national concern. Alternatively, the more attention television dedicated to an issue; the more the issue became a concern for viewers.<sup>128</sup> Through its coverage, television has the ability to influence the agenda of priorities in the nation. Exposure to a single news story impacted viewers' priorities. Those who are politically less experienced or inclined are more vulnerable to television's influences because they are less critical and less resistant to the news. Lacking the intellectual resources to scrutinize the information presented in the news, these individuals find the information more compelling and allow it to shape their judgments.

With 24-hour television broadcasts available, agenda-setting is a continuous process. Television coverage on a specific topic impacted viewers' perspective on that specific topic and not necessarily associated topics (i.e. increase drug abuse and possible association with level of domestic battery cases). Agenda-setting effects were inconclusive only on issues that the viewers already regarded as highly important. These effects are not momentary or permanent; they persist until new information alters that perspective and induces a reprioritization. The networks develop and change priorities and these patterns impact viewers' preferences. Iyengar examined the causal relation between television and public opinion and found strong support that television does influence public opinion. For instance, he found that a few media stories per month could affect public attention on a subject.<sup>129</sup>

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128. Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, *News that Matters*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 16.

129. Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, *News that Matters*, 31.

In light of this theoretical discussion on the media and its potential, I selected to analyze the discourse reflected on al Jazeera because of the station's popularity and influence. With the motto "*al-ra'i ... wal-ra'i al-akhr*" – the opinion and the other opinion – al Jazeera has become an important platform for political debates and social movement activities. Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani formed al Jazeera by decree in 1996 as an independent, all news and Arab station based in Qatar.<sup>130</sup> By 1999, al Jazeera's popularity soared. Al Jazeera's appeal was due to its independence, and the fact that it is an Arab station covering issues of Arab concern from an Arab perspective. The controversy of its topics (i.e. criticisms of Arab rulers) served as constant reminders of its independence. Some credited al Jazeera with loosening the shackles of censorship and widening the sphere of acceptable public discourse in the Arab world.<sup>131</sup> Supported by fifty foreign correspondents in thirty-one countries to include Israel, the United States, Afghanistan, and Iraq, al Jazeera exposed the Muslim world to a greater variety of information.<sup>132</sup> It features Muslim and Western guests, and has interviewed Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, and Condoleeza Rice. Additionally, al Jazeera broadcasts all White House, Pentagon, and State Department press briefings.<sup>133</sup> Gaining exclusive access to the Taliban, Osama bin Laden, and Saddam Hussein during times of conflict, al Jazeera's notoriety and prestige rose regionally and internationally. What began as a six hours a day operation grew to a twenty-four hour daily news broadcast station by 1999.

An estimated 35 to 45 million households in the Muslim world with an additional estimated 4.5 million in the United States and Europe watch al Jazeera.<sup>134</sup> In a 2004

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130. Mohammed El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar, *Al-Jazeera*, (Cambridge: Westview Press, 2003), 42.

131. Davan Maharaj, "How Tiny Qatar Jars Arab Media," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 May 2001, <http://www.proquest.com> (accessed 10 May 2005).

132. William A. Rugh, *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics*, (Westport: Praeger, 2004), 216-218.

133. Stephen Quinn and Tim Walters, "Al Jazeera: A Broadcaster Creating Ripples in a Stagnant Pool," in *Global Media Go to War: Role of News and Entertainment Media During the 2003 Iraq War*, ed. Ralph D. Berenger (Spokane: Marquette Books, 2004), 57-71.

134. Davan Maharaj, "How Tiny Qatar Jars Arab Media," and Erik C. Nisbet et al, "Public Diplomacy, Television News, and Muslim Opinion," *Press/Politics*, 9(2), 19. Of note, no authoritative, standard and precise figures exist on the number of satellite television viewers in the region. Consequently, the accuracy of this figure is questionable. Also, the costs of satellite dishes vary within the region. In 2003, an inexpensive satellite dish cost about \$285 in Iraq.

survey of the region, Zogby International found that most satellite viewers watched al Jazeera for international news 62 percent in Jordan, 54 per cent in Morocco, 46 percent in the United Arab Emirates, and 44 percent in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.<sup>135</sup> More recently, a survey conducted in Cairo, Egypt in 2005 found that 88 percent of satellite television viewers watched al Jazeera.<sup>136</sup> Zogby also found that 38.9 percent of those surveyed learned about the U.S. by watching Arab media. In Saudi Arabia, 68 percent said they learned about the U.S. by watching Arab commentaries in the Arab media.<sup>137</sup> In 1998, a survey conducted in Egypt found that the number one reason people watched satellite television is “to understand what’s going on in the world.” This gives stations like al Jazeera considerable leverage to influence public understanding and opinion.<sup>138</sup> Regional states and American policy makers monitor the station regularly.<sup>139</sup> In fact, this thesis uses information on al Jazeera derived from the U.S. government’s primary foreign media monitoring agency, the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). American and regional attention accorded to al Jazeera provides it with considerable influence to shape not only popular opinion but also to impact regional states’ and American government’s perceptions, which may influence their political options.

Possible criticisms of using al Jazeera include the station’s political agenda and its biased perspectives. I will not address whether or not al Jazeera has a political agenda or attempt to identify the particulars of that agenda because that issue is a separate concern

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135. Benjamin Duncan, “Poll Reveals Arabs’ True Feelings on US,” *Al Jazeera*, 26 July 2004, <http://english.aljazeera.net> (accessed 10 May 2005), Samantha M. Shapiro, “The War Inside the Arab Newsroom,” *New York Times*, 2 January 2005, <http://faculty.washington.edu/pnhoward/teaching/mms/arabnewsroom.pdf>, and Khaled Dawoud, “Arab Opinions,” *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 701 (29 July- 4 August 2004), <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/701/in2.htm> (accessed 8 September 2005).

136. Philip Seib, “Press freedoms should extend to al Jazeera as well,” *Journal Sentinel Online*, 12 February 2005, <http://www.jsonline.com/news/editorials/feb05/301034.asp> (accessed 22 August 2005).

137. John Zogby, “How Arabs View America, How Arabs Learn about America,” Zogby International, pg 13, <http://www.comm.cornell.edu/als481/readings/Impressions%20of%20America%202004.pdf> (accessed 28 May 2005).

138. Hala Abdel Rahman, “Uses and Gratification of Satellite TV in Egypt,” *Transnational Broadcasting Studies*, no.1 (Fall 1998), [http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Fall98/Documents1/Uses/uses\\_table.html](http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Fall98/Documents1/Uses/uses_table.html) (accessed 8 September 2005).

139. “Press Briefing by Ari Fleischer,” 5 November 2001, *The White House*, 5 November 2001, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011105-6.html> (accessed 22 August 2005).

that is not the focus of this thesis. I do propose, however, that al Jazeera has promoted discussions of the democracy topic. For example on the show “The Opposite Direction” in March 2005 the topic of discussion was democratic changes in the Arab world;<sup>140</sup> in November 2004 the topic was U.S. presidential elections and U.S. democracy;<sup>141</sup> and in December 2004, the station interviewed an Egyptian human rights activist on promoting democracy in the Arab world.<sup>142</sup> The use of the word democracy has increasingly become part of al Jazeera’s vernacular. A review of FBIS’s records on al Jazeera Satellite Television Channel reveals that the use of the word democracy reflected in 2.3 percent of its records on the station in 2001, and this percentage increased to 6.9 percent by September 2005.<sup>143</sup>

While al Jazeera has biases, these have a negligible impact on this thesis. Scholars have found that, in spite of its biases, al Jazeera provides comparable coverage to Western stations like the Cable News Network (CNN).<sup>144</sup> When al Jazeera’s coverage is compared with other regional television stations such as the Syrian Satellite Channel (SSC) and Abu Dhabi Satellite Television (ADSC), the differences in their attitudes on news topics such as the U.S. are insignificant. For example, al Jazeera’s coverage of the U.S. had a negativity rating of 7.1 percent; ADSC and SSC have negativity ratings of 7.2 and 6.8 percent respectively.<sup>145</sup> In other words, Arab television stations generally reflect more critical attitudes toward the U.S., so al Jazeera is not unique or exceptional in its

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140. “Al-Jazirah Talk Show Discusses Democratization in Arab World,” FBIS GMP20050309000004, 8 March 2005.

141. “Al-Jazirah Debates US Democracy, 'Unprecedented Turnout' on Election Nigh,” FBIS GMP20041102000244, 2 November 2004.

142. “Egyptian Activist Ibrahim Discusses Human Rights, Democracy in Arab World,” FBIS GMP20041201000275, 1 December 2004.

143. Using the FBIS database search engine, I looked up al Jazeera Satellite Channel records. In FBIS, I entered “Doha Al-Jazirah Satellite” with the word “democracy.” There were 43 hits in 2001 and 176 from 1 January to 1 September 2005. I then looked at the total number of records on the station with no additional caveats. There were 1,888 hits in 2001 and 2,569 for the 2005 period. To get the percentage, I did the math.

144. Matthew A. Gentzkow and Jesse M. Shapiro, “Media, Education, and Anti-Americanism in the Muslim World,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 18, no. 3 (Summer 2004), 125.

145. Muhammad I. Ayish, “Political Communication on Arab World Television: Evolving Patterns,” *Political Communication*, 19 (2002), 147.

anti-American stance. Of note, according to a Zogby poll of the region in 2004, on average 83.3 percent of Arabs expressed unfavorable views of America.<sup>146</sup>

#### **D. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

Given television news coverage's influence, I explore how movement actors are debating or commenting on America and democracy on al Jazeera Satellite Television. I use FBIS records of al Jazeera that contain the words "democracy" and "America" or its derivatives (U.S., Bush, etc.) because I am interested in analyzing how the region is reacting to American promotion of democracy in particular.<sup>147</sup> I am looking to see if opposing movement dynamics are evident as a consequence of American promotion. Is a frame contest developing? Has the political discourse become polarized or is there a consensus of opinion? My assumption is that when al Jazeera records contain the word "America" and "democracy" – even when the discussions are not necessarily addressing American promotion of democracy specifically – individual biases towards America's effort will reflect in the connotations guests associate with democracy when America is mentioned in the same show or discourse. I am interested in cataloguing what messages are being conveyed to the audience. I focus on recording the connotations attached to the word "democracy" because these connotations reinforce particular frames such as "American democracy is not real," etc. Conceptually, these competing frames are associated with feuding movements. Because of television's agenda-setting effects, I deduced that the frequency with which democracy is portrayed, positively or negatively, matters and helps to shape individual understanding of America's democratization policy.

I looked at 576 FBIS records on al Jazeera during the timeframe of 1 January 1998 to 1 September 2005. The reports are analyzed to record the connotation attached to the word "democracy" when it is expressed (see Figure 1). Each articulation of the word "democracy" represents a data point and is registered – a total of 1,373 utterances were recorded. One record may contain one or multiple references to democracy or data points. The articulations are characterized as pro-democracy, critical of American democracy, anti-American democracy (emotional), and neutral (see Figure 2). Each category of

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146. John Zogby, "How Arabs View America," 3.

147. The exact wording or spelling entered into FBIS's search engine was "'Doha Al-Jazirah Satellite" and democracy and ("United States" or America or Bush)."



frames is compared and graphed to observe developing trends. Unfavorable frames to American interests (critical and anti categories) have been disaggregated to capture the nuances of negative opinions expressed as well as isolate emotional tendencies. To explore the polarization of the political sphere, the percentage of total favorable and unfavorable frames are compared.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

While scholars, proponents, and opponents continue to debate its impact on the region, they generally agree that al Jazeera is a dominant force that cannot be ignored.<sup>148</sup> Al Jazeera's role as a transnational public sphere is also important. The discourses reflected in its broadcasts provide insight not only into what the Arab world views as important but also into how the region is responding to American policies. In using a method to quantify the volume and variety of this discourse on democracy and America, patterns become distinguishable. The outlined method and the aforementioned theoretical perspectives provide the basis for dissecting patterns to determine whether opposing movement dynamics, frame contests, and polarization of the political discourse are evident and discuss their implications. In the next chapter, I present the findings.

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148. Hugh Miles, "What the World Thinks of al Jazeera," *Transnational Broadcasting Studies*, no.14 (Spring 2005), <http://www.tbsjournal.com/miles.html> (accessed 18 August 2005), and Abdallah Schleifer, "Al Jazeera: One More into the Fray," *Transnational Broadcasting Studies*, no. 14 (Spring 2005), <http://www.tbsjournal.com/schleiferaljazeera.html> (accessed 18 August 2005).



## Al-Jazirah Hosts Al-Qaradawi on 'Religious Rhetoric', 'Martyrdom Operations'

GMP20041120000196 Doha Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television in Arabic 1835 GMT 20 Nov 04

["Open Dialogue" talk show, moderated by Ghassan Bin-Jiddu, in the Beirut studio -- live]

He continues: "Some time ago, a vicious campaign was launched against renowned preacher Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi in some western circles, accusing him of inciting terrorism and describing him as the leader of extremism and radical, extremist, and fundamental clerics."

Critical

Bin-Jiddu poses the question: "Is it true this [religious] rhetoric fundamentally incites terrorism, rejects the west, and is removed from freedom, **democracy**, and tolerance or is it that some people in the west cannot distinguish between a moderate and a radical scholar? Are the scholars required to critically re-assess their rhetoric so as to make it more realistic and responsive to international changes to avoid unleashing the futile phenomenon of the clash of civilizations? Or are western policies, particularly US ones, required to critically re-assess the way they deal with the Islamic and Arab worlds?"

Asked a question, he urges Emerson to "have the courage to acknowledge the injustices" being committed against Muslims in the West Bank, Iraq, and Guantanamo, which he says "could explode and lead to other acts that can be described as extremist."

He adds: "We call for dialogue, tolerance, openness, and humanitarianism. Unfortunately, he [Emerson] says: We call for **democracy** and freedom, but they are seeking public freedoms before applying Islamic law... They want **democracy** but after making deals with leaders and letting some people inherit this and that. They have long supported dictatorships in our Arab and Islamic countries. We seek true **democracy**. We would like to deal with the west as equals, not to be treated as masters treat their slaves... we want to co-exist with others under common humanitarian rules."

Pro Democracy

Critical

Pro-Democracy

Figure 1. Example of FBIS Record: Labeling of "Democracy"

Category	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Description</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Democracy</p> <pre> graph TD     Democracy --&gt; Concept     Democracy --&gt; ForeignPolicy[Foreign Policy]           </pre> <p style="text-align: center;">Concept   Foreign Policy</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Pro-Democracy (concept only)</p>	<p><b>Generally supportive of the idea of democracy; examples include comments such as:</b></p> <p>“Kuwait is a bastion of democracy”</p> <p>“We must have democracy”</p> <p>“Democracy is right for everyone”</p> <p>“Iran is a democracy”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Critical of American Democracy (primarily foreign policy)</p>	<p><b>Attempts to undermine American legitimacy and credibility in promoting democracy by highlighting duplicity and raising doubts; examples include comments such as:</b></p> <p>“Is there a crisis in American/British democracy”</p> <p>“Sharon does not have to implement democracy because he has America’s backing”</p> <p>“Democracy means choices, not imposition”</p> <p>“The West does not want democracy for us”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Anti-American Democracy/ Emotional (primarily foreign policy)</p>	<p><b>Attacks of American efforts and persons and equating support of American policies as hostile to Arab interests; often relating American efforts to violence, destruction, and death; examples include comments such as:</b></p> <p>“We support democracy not Bushacry”</p> <p>“Democracy is used as a cover to kill opponents”</p> <p>“Democracy means regime change”</p> <p>“U.S. is <i>against</i> democracy in the Arab world”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Neutral (either concept or foreign policy)</p>	<p><b>Detached and neutral use of the word often reflected during Western guests’ discussion on democracy or in broadcasters posing questions on the subject; statements of fact; examples include comments such as:</b></p> <p>“Democracy is a system of governance”</p> <p>“What is the role of democracy”</p>

Figure 2. Description of Data Categories

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## **IV. FINDINGS**

In this chapter, I present the findings to answer the aims outlined in Chapter I. To reiterate, this study's aims are to discover whether Middle Easterners' frames have changed subsequent to American democracy promotion; to explore whether a frame contest is evident and evaluate the consequence of such a contest; and to discuss the impact of those consequences for states. The evidence presented does show that change to framing of democracy has occurred in the region. A frame contest is occurring and has resulted in a polarized political discourse. The evidence also shows that credibility remains a central factor. The chapter is organized into five sections. Each section explores the study's findings in greater detail. The first section looks at changes in frames. The second focuses on the evidence of a frame contest. The third discusses the role of credibility as seen in the data. The fourth examines the evidence of polarization. The last section discusses the implication of polarization of the political space for democratization. Tables and a graph of the data are provided after the conclusion. Additional graphs and table are also available in the appendix.

### **A. CHANGES TO DEMOCRACY FRAMES FOLLOWING OVERT AMERICAN PROMOTION**

In looking at the data, I found that prior to overt American promotion of democracy in 2002, guests on al Jazeera generally used the word democracy favorably and without caveats (i.e. true, real, etc.). Despite anger, intense and increasing, democracy was still well received; favorable expressions reflected supportive attitudes toward the concept of democracy that was not associated with America. The opposite result obtained after the U.S. campaign associated democracy with the U.S. indicates that, had democracy been associated with America during this initial time period, there is a good probability that more unfavorable expressions would have been evident.

From 1998 to 2002, several key incidents affected the Arab world and would undoubtedly have reflected in Arab articulations of democracy if democracy had been perceived as being synonymous with supporting an American agenda. Considerable anger in the Middle East was aimed at Israel and America during this time period. In a

Zogby poll of the region taken in 2002, on average 73.6 percent of the participants expressed unfavorable views of America.<sup>149</sup> Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount on 28 September 2000 sparked the beginning of the second *intifada*. The killing of 12-year-old Mohammed al-Durra by Israeli fire as his father held him in his arms became an iconic figure and heightened the Arab world's distaste of Israel and, by extension, America. Shortly after the al-Durra killing, top Arab recording artists released the song "Jerusalem Will Return to Us" in which the boy's name is featured prominently; this song galvanized the region.<sup>150</sup> Anger against America was also due to its direct actions, such as the attack on Afghanistan. Another was President George W. Bush's unconditional support for Prime Minister Sharon and calling him a "man of peace" even as Israeli forces were engaged in a bloody reoccupation of the West Bank in 2002.<sup>151</sup>

Needless to say, the Arab world's ire towards America was intense. In spite of the anger, democracy was often expressed as a cherished good reserved for worthy people. It was also a tool to combat the region's problems. A guest argued that "... had there been democracy in Iraq, the invasion of Kuwait would not have taken place."<sup>152</sup> Becoming more democratic was seen as a way to escape the crisis that was weakening Arab dignity and justice.<sup>153</sup> Democracy was an ideal sought for its own sake, independent of foreign promotion.

Evolution of the democracy frame occurred in three phases. First, from 2002 to 2003, likely due to the high expectations of American success in implanting liberal reforms, democracy was viewed favorably and as an independent ideal. Second, from the

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149. John Zogby, "How Arabs View America, How Arabs Learn about America," Zogby International, pg 3, <http://www.comm.cornell.edu/als481/readings/Impressions%20of%20America%202004.pdf> (accessed 28 May 2005).

150. Mohammed El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar, *Al-Jazeera*, (Cambridge: Westview Press, 2003), 8.

151. Marc Lynch, "Taking Arabs Seriously," *Transnational Broadcasting Studies*, no. 11 (Fall-Winter 2003), [http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Fall03/Marc\\_Lynch.html](http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Fall03/Marc_Lynch.html) (accessed 18 September 2005).

152. "Al-Jazeera TV Interviews Kuwaiti Information Minister," FBIS GMP20000224000067, 24 February 2000.

153. "Arab Panelists Disagree About Usamah Bin-Ladin's Importance," FBIS GMP20010711000217, 10 July 2001.

end of 2003 to 2004, democracy and America began to be closely associated, and the discourse became increasingly unfavorable as disillusionment with American progress began to crystallize. Third, in 2004, democracy and America became conflated – democracy transformed from a cherished ideal to a corrupted American design.

Since the launching of America's democracy promotion program in 2002, favorable frames continued their upward trend until 2004 (see Table 2 for annual trends). Favorable frames increased by close to 10 percent from 2002 to 2003. In 2003, expressed favorable frames for democracy reached its zenith at 46.4 percent, and unfavorable articulations were at their nadir at 34.6 percent.<sup>154</sup> These trends are surprising in light of the attack against Iraq. Just three years earlier, the region united in support of Iraq and in defiance of UN sanctions against the country.<sup>155</sup> Although Saddam Hussein was not a popular figure, the American attack and the goal of regime change had far reaching implications that transcended Hussein. One would have expected unfavorable reactions to dominate, but the opposite dynamic is evident.

The attack on Iraq sent mixed messages to the region about American commitment to democracy. For some, it was seen as a warning to which they responded defensively by publicly embracing democracy to signal to the U.S. that they submit to its wishes and so should be left alone. Representatives from Libya and Syria were prominent in expressing their willingness to embrace democracy.<sup>156</sup> Those with a history of liberalization presented themselves as examples to emulate – Kuwait and Morocco's statures were elevated internationally and regionally. Their "democracy" was viewed as a badge of honor that they proudly flaunted. A Kuwaiti guest boastfully claimed that the small city-state of Kuwait enjoyed democracy long before the United States became a nation.<sup>157</sup> Others were hopeful that America would be successful in spurring democracy in Iraq, particularly, and the region generally. Given the dire social, political, and

154. This statement does not include FY98 to FY00 figures because of the small sample size (N = 9); it includes data since 2001.

155. Marc Lynch, "Beyond the Arab Street: Iraq and the Arab Public Sphere," *Politics & Society*, vol. 31, no. 1 (March 2003), 69.

156. "Al-Qadhafi's Son on Libya's Foreign, Domestic Policies, Succession," FBIS GMP20040325000153, 24 March 2004.

157. "Analysts Discuss Arab-US Security Cooperation," FBIS GMP20031113000016, 7 November 2003

economic circumstances of the region, one guest reasoned that supporting American promotion of democracy may be necessary in spite of the region's distrust or distaste of the U.S.<sup>158</sup>

Towards the end of 2003 and beginning of 2004, a reversal of trends began to materialize – the frames began gradually to change from the general concept of democracy to an esoteric understanding. As early as 2001, Arab guests were warning of the possible negative backlash of American promotion of democracy. A guest expressed the belief that American pressure may encourage secularists to support Islamists, whom secularists would not normally endorse, to oppose American demands because it is perceived as an external threat trying to impose its wishes on the state.<sup>159</sup> Increasingly, democracy began to be closely associated with America. Arabs supportive of the concept of democracy were keen to differentiate their goals and distanced themselves from the U.S. One guest proffered that there is a pressing need to extricate democracy from American interests.<sup>160</sup> Another guest clarified that the Palestinians are seeking democracy for its own value and not those of American interests.<sup>161</sup> Arab democracy advocates also expressed some resentment toward perceived American hijacking of the issue of democracy. The resentment is partly due to perceived American culpability in supporting undemocratic regimes. A guest insisted that democracy is favored and demanded in the region and was a concern before America took any interest in the Arab people's plight for democracy. He charged that America stifled and continues to impede the growth of democracy by supporting authoritarian regimes.<sup>162</sup>

In 2004, the frames of democracy changed. A reversal of trends between favorable and unfavorable articulations occurred. While favorable expressions decrease

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158. "FYI Al-Jazirah Program Discusses Whether To Support US Project in Iraq," FBIS GMP20031023000004, 22 October 2003.

159. "Al-Jazirah TV on Impact of US Campaign on Liberties in Arab Countries," FBIS GMP20011123000224, 22 November 2001.

160. "Syrian Opposition Figures View New Opposition Alliance Launched in Washington," FBIS GMP20031121000245, 20 November 2003.

161. "PA's Urayqat Says US Stand on Arafat Not Linked to Arafat's Person," FBIS GMP20020630000181, 30 June 2002.

162. "Al-Jazirah Program: US, Arab Experts View President Bush's Democracy Address," FBIS GMP20031107000202, 6 November 2003.



by 22.6 percent, unfavorable expressions increase by 21.1 percent. The majority of the expressed articulations of democracy for the year were unfavorable – close to 42 percent of the utterances were negative. The increased negativity may be due to failed expectations and disillusionment with America. In spite of the region’s criticisms, some retained the hope that perhaps America would be successful in implementing democracy in Iraq and the region. In 2002, when America launched its program, the majority of the utterances were favorable – 42.3 percent of the expressions were favorable compared to 35.9 percent unfavorable articulations. However, with the release of the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse photos, those who were favorable of American support were undermined. Positive articulations on democracy were increasingly drowned by criticism of the U.S. as the situation in Iraq continued to deteriorate. Positive references on democracy came consistently from Iraqi and Palestinian government affiliates.

The increased insecurity and violence in Iraq and other countries such as Saudi Arabia flamed the region’s anger against perceived American failure to fulfill its promises, worsening the situation for Arabs and Muslims. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad asserted that unlike in the past, Muslims were being targeted for discrimination in the United States and this discrimination has become rampant and routine. Muslims wishing to travel to America faced increased restrictions and reduced numbers of student visas.<sup>163</sup>

Evidence suggesting that the region is viewing democracy as inherently American is clear in 2004. A common perspective associating American democracy with death and destruction began to emerge. One guest made the emotional plea “What kind of democracy and freedom are these at a time when the sons of our people are still being slaughtered?”<sup>164</sup> During a televised poll viewers were asked if they believed in “U.S. democracy.” At different intervals during the show, the anchor repeated, “Eighty four percent of Arabs do not believe in your democracy ... [they] do not believe in U.S.

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163. “Al-Jazirah TV Interviews Malaysia’s Mahathir on US Policy, Iraq, Palestine Question,” GMP20041209000153, 8 December 2004

164. “Al-Jazirah: Al-Sadr Aide Says ‘Getting Ready’ for ‘Martyrdom Operations,’” FBIS GMP20040819000184, 19 August 2004.

democracy at all.”<sup>165</sup> What is clear in both of these examples is that as “Arabs” and “sons of our people” accepting a democracy associated with America is unacceptable. In the end, the frame of democracy has changed from democracy as a general good to a democracy inherently American in design.

## **B. EVIDENCE OF FRAME CONTESTS**

Framing democracy as inherently American, America unwittingly facilitated opposing movements’ attacks of its framing. The combination of America’s framing of democracy and its attack against Afghanistan and Iraq created powerful incentives for movement entrepreneurs to react. Alternatively, America provided its opponents the “cognitive liberation” they needed to gain legitimacy to respond and galvanize peoples’ consciousness.<sup>166</sup> These opposing movement entrepreneurs used the attacks to convert initial feelings of indignation to long term moral outrage or sustained antipathy. Movement actors have tried to discredit (critical frames), vilify (anti/emotional frames), and neutralize (critical and anti/emotional frames) America’s efforts by offering competing frames of democracy. In sum, opposing movements have emerged. A frame contest is evident and mimics opposing movement dynamics.

Still, competition to establish a hegemonic interpretation of democracy separate from America is on-going on al Jazeera. The frame contest is between “real democracy” and “American democracy.” American democracy is associated with violence, coercion, social chaos, military intervention and regime change. Iraqi Vice President Ghazi Ajil al-Yawir took pride in his country’s political advances, but made clear that “This is the real democracy.”<sup>167</sup> Chief Editor of the London-based Al-Quds al-Arabi paper, Abd-al-Bari Atwan, stated, “We also want democracy to be a genuine democracy that serves the region and not a democracy that serves the interests of the U.S. and Israeli hegemony on

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165. “Al-Jazirah: Al-Sadr Aide Says ‘Getting Ready’ for ‘Martyrdom Operations,’” FBIS GMP20040819000184, 19 August 2004.

166. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, “Introduction: Why Emotions Matter,” in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, ed. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 7.

167. “Al-Jazirah Interviews Iraq’s Al-Yawir on Domestic Conditions, US Attitude, Iran,” FBIS GMP20050417522001, 16 April 2005.

the region. This is the difference.”<sup>168</sup> Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid Head of the Lebanese Hizballah Political Council, explained, “We cannot respect a democracy behind which there are weapons or fleets. This is false democracy. This is the democracy he [Bush] wants to impose on the Arab and Islamic world.”<sup>169</sup> Guests are increasingly sensitive to differentiating their own understanding of democracy from perceived American interpretations. Association with American democracy is detrimental to their interests and is reflected in these attempts to create distance by embracing the “real democracy” frames. The frame contest has become so entrenched that Western guests have had to defend their representative democracies as “real.” For example, on the show *Opposite Direction*, Daniel Pipes, the director of the Middle East Studies Forum in the United States was asked to comment on polling data that showed Arabs did not believe in American democracy. Pipes countered that America’s democracy is real given that presidential elections occur every four years to replace the nation’s leader; whereas in most states in the region, even when elections are held, the leaders are predetermined or permanent.<sup>170</sup>

Few guests have defined or outlined what “real democracy” entails. “Real democracy” is taken as a self-evident statement. Others seem to imply that “real democracy” is one that is compatible with the indigenous culture. President Bashar al-Asad expressed that Syrians want a democracy that takes into account their national and Arab interests and not one conceived to protect or advance Israeli or American interests.<sup>171</sup> There is consistently recognition for the need to reform, but there is also an active search for an alternative to America’s vision. Libya’s Mu’ammar al-Qadhafi proposed his indigenous model as more consistent with the spirit of the original Athens

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168. “Arab, Muslim Figures Criticize Western Campaign Against Religious Schools,” FBIS GMP20050717564001, 17 July 2005.

169. “Lebanon: Hizballah Official on Beirut Rally, Opposition Demands, Bush's Speech,” FBIS GMP20050309000225, 9 March 2005.

170. “Al-Jazirah Debates US Democracy, 'Unprecedented Turnout' on Election Night,” FBIS GMP20041102000244, 2 November 2004, and “Castro Interviewed on US, Arab, Israeli, Iraqi Ties, Domestic Affairs,” FBIS GMP20010518000201, 17 May 2001.

171. “Al-Jazirah Talk Show Discusses Regional 'Changes,' Syrian Situation,” FBIS GMP20050301000301, 1 March 2005.

democratic model of direct citizen participation.<sup>172</sup> Others suggested that Arabs already have an authentic democracy – political Islam, and America fears this alternative. A guest expressed that if fair democratic elections were held America would not support its outcome because Islamists, because of their popularity, are likely to win. He continued to comment that America presents democracy as if there are no alternatives, but in fact political Islam is widely accepted as a viable alternative to “American democracy.”<sup>173</sup>

### C. CREDIBILITY REMAINS CENTRAL

Of the 537 unfavorable utterances recorded, 87.7 percent were not rejections of democracy per se, but rather critical of American promoted democracy (see Table 2). Even those who expressed antipathy toward American promoted democracy were specific in rejecting “American democracy” and not the ideals of traditional democracies. Still, the preponderance of views expressed was supportive of the concept of democracy, a finding consistent with other assessments. For instance, a 2004 survey of Jordanians found that 91 percent of the participants favored democracy as a system of governance.<sup>174</sup> Regardless, the unfavorable expressions do serve to hinder formulating and conveying a unified expressed position on democracy which is framed as inherently American. Democracy and America have been morphed and combined, and so the criticisms are levied indiscriminately. For example, a caller expressed his view that Westerners were engaged in a campaign to impose their beliefs and norms on Arabs even while they violated those very norms when these principles conflicted with their interests – Western advocacy of democracy is merely a slogan to seduce Arabs into docility.<sup>175</sup> In another example a guest offered, “... if we want to spread democracy, then it cannot be along U.S. lines. Only a crazy person would believe that the United States wants democracy in the Arab region, in Iraq. If this is the democracy they want in Iraq, then away with such

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172. “Al-Jazirah TV Interviews Libyan Leader on Weapons, US Ties, Other Issues,” FBIS GMP20050102000112, 31 December 2004.

173. “Al-Jazirah's 'Opposite Direction' Examines Chances of US-Muslim Dialogue Success,” FBIS GMP20050412537002, 12 April 05.

174. *Democracy in Jordan 2004*, Center for Strategic Studies University of Jordan, 3, <http://www.css-jordan.org/polls/democracy/DemocracyPoll2004-en.pdf> (accessed 18 September 2005).

175. “Al-Jazirah Talk Show Discusses Egyptian TV Drama 'Horseman Without a Horse',” FBIS GMP20021107000218, 6 November 2002.

democracy."<sup>176</sup> Ironically, while democracy is desirable, because the U.S. is calling for it, the Arabs should do otherwise. Rather than focus the debate on the values of democracy or voicing unequivocal support for the concept, democracy is conflated with America and unabashedly criticized and undermined.

#### **D. POLARIZED POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON DEMOCRACY**

In 2005 (from 1 January to 1 September), favorable and unfavorable utterances reached near parity – 41.3 percent expressed favorable views of democracy while 40.1 percent expressed unfavorable views (see Figure 3 and Table 1). The political discourse has become polarized with neither side (favorable toward democracy and unfavorable towards American democracy) gaining a significant relative advantage over the other. Specifically, of the 1,373 recorded utterances of democracy, 40.6 percent were favorable and 39.1 percent were unfavorable. The views expressed are almost evenly split on the issue of democracy and America's promotion of the concept.

Emotions also played a central role in polarizing the political discourse. Because emotional frames are inherently dramatic, they make for good television and received considerable news coverage, which increased their saliency. Emotions fueled the critical and anti-U.S. frames and hindered the dominance of pro-democracy frames by advocating uncompromising stances. Emotional or anti-U.S. frames equated choosing to side with democracy as siding with America. Aligning oneself with America is analogous to self-hatred and betrayal, and is shunned as an acceptable option. There is no compromising; true Arabs and Muslim do not side with America. Movement actors used emotional comments that evoked demands for justice and respect as well as defensive solidarity. Their rhetoric could not be dismissed because they expressed and tapped into some of the region's most fundamental concerns, such as the Palestinian's plight for a homeland. The Secretary General of the Palestinian Authority Council of Ministers Ahmad Abd-al Rahman expressed, "... the basic question for those who ask for democracy and reform from us is that: Don't they see the Israel beast? Don't they see the

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176. "Former Jordanian Education Minister on Curricula 'Development'," FBIS GMP20040219000024, 18 February 2004.

Israeli killing of the Palestinians?”<sup>177</sup> Following a firefight between U.S. and Iraqi security forces against insurgent forces in which civilians were injured, an Iraqi witness shared, “A man came with his son to the market [in Al-Qarmah, Iraq] in the morning to shop. The Americans hit him. Did he do anything wrong? He burned inside the car. His flesh is still here. Is this the democracy Allawi is advocating?”<sup>178</sup> Both examples stirred the audience’s emotions and called for solidarity in demanding justice, which they feel America and its associates are unable or willing to provide.

In this emotionally charged environment and, given the broad social consequences of democracy, people are compelled to choose an interpretation – in so doing, the divide becomes more accentuated.<sup>179</sup> Emotional frames ensured that those who remained proponents of democracy refrained from publicly and explicitly endorsing American efforts. This explains the use of the broad “real democracy” or specifying “our democracy” frames to distinguish their interpretations from those of the U.S. Democracy advocates are compelled to qualify their position. Ayman Nur, one of Egypt’s leading democracy and reform advocates, stated that while he is adamant about pushing for democracy in Egypt, he would never barter his nation’s sovereignty and risk American interference or military occupation for the sake of democracy.<sup>180</sup> In clarify his position, Nur acknowledged that American democracy is somehow illegitimate, less real or propaganda – this acquiescence bolstered the opposition and helped to sharpen the polarization.

## **E. POLARIZATION AND ITS EFFECTS ON DEMOCRATIZATION**

In competing to dominate peoples’ consciousness, the resulting framing contest frustrates and distorts understandings of democracy and creates an implacable schism

177. “PA Cabinet SecGen on Reported Resignation of Ministers, Rashid US Visit,” FBIS GMP20020518000190, 18 May 2002.

178. “Al-Jazirah Reports Attacks on US, Iraqi Forces; Statement on Operations,” FBIS GMP20041201000251, 1 December 2004.

179. Randall Collins, “Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention,” in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, ed. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Fransesca Polletta (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 41.

180. “Al-Jazirah Talk Show Discusses US Plan for New Middle East,” FBIS GMP20050402000154, 2 April 2005.

within the political space. In other words, this result serves neither to educate the people about democracy, nor motivate people to act against the state (internal pressure), but rather promotes the inadvertent defense of the state and the status quo by opposing American demands for change. In the process of formulating a coherent and divergent understanding of democracy from that of America, opposing movement activists denigrated the importance of democracy. To the audience observing these debates, what becomes lost is what exactly is defined as real democracy. Is it Iraq, the U.S., Kuwait, Great Britain, Libya, or Lebanon? Democracy becomes subjective. An al Jazeera correspondent asked, “We speak of the democracy of tribes, clans, and communities. Does this not mean that the Arab world has been living in democracy for over 2,000 years without feeling it? This is so because tribes, clans, and sects have always been there.”<sup>181</sup> The audience is left wondering if that is the case and Arabs have been living democratically without the label of democracy, then why all this talk for change. What more could American democracy offer that tribal democracy has not already provided the Arabs? What is America’s real interest? Absent from the discussions is what democracy can do for the average Arab. Democracy remains a malleable abstract concept without tangible appeal. Democracy’s definition is broadened to mean everything and nothing concomitantly. Democracy has been defined as Israeli repression, freedom of opinion, Palestinian right to political power, respect for individual choice, Saudi enforcement of *sharia*, and reestablishment of Iraqi unity. Alternatively, the polarization accentuated by emotions leads to, at minimum, confusion and, at maximum, total rejection of democracy.

Inarguably, Middle Eastern states are responding to increased American pressure as is evident in the elections in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. However, a polarized political discourse detracts from the internal pressure necessary to compel the states to loosen their autonomy of the political space and democratize. President Hosni Mubarak has been in power for 24 years, and the recent election has done nothing to change this situation. The Saudi regime has held power for 73 years; the municipal elections do not threaten its

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181. “Libya: Al-Qadhafi’s Son Interviewed on Libyan Economy, Ties With Arabs, Africa,” FBIS GMP20050427533004, 27 April 2005.

longevity. This is partly due to the fact that states' threat perception of the internal opposition or internal pressure is low.

The 2005 Egyptian election supports this assessment. Mubarak's regime disregarded domestic and international demands and orchestrated the election in a manner most favorable to its interests. The popular Muslim Brotherhood was banned; only three weeks of campaigning was allowed; international observers were rejected; and the new election laws stipulate that independent candidates must secure endorsements from individuals or bodies such as the parliament, which is dominated by Mubarak's ruling party.<sup>182</sup> These decisions indicate that Mubarak did not feel the need to compromise – he did not have to contend or concede to internal pressure. Had internal pressure been a factor, interests other than those of the regime would have reflected in the decisions. The low voter turnout further substantiates the regime's perception of a lack of internal pressure – just 23 percent of available voters took part in the elections.<sup>183</sup> Had a regional consensus reflected in the media, greater pressure could have influenced Mubarak's decisions. Because no such consensus existed, the regime maneuvered freely. Lacking an incentive to make substantial political changes, the regime makes reforms necessary to strengthen its power (i.e. economic liberalization, increase defense spending, cosmetic political liberalization, etc.) to retain the status quo.

In fact, the polarized discourse serves as a defense for the state. In a show of defensive solidarity, opponents to American pressure discard their demands of the state to present a unified opposition to a perceived external threat. In the process the states are not only shielded from external threats but also from internal threats. The polarized political space radicalizes the positions (you are either with us or them) and moderate or alternate options become extinct. Those against American efforts attack those that seem conciliatory and undermine democracy proponents' demands of the state. Ironically, groups that would have otherwise been united in calling for the states to change have become divided over when they should make such demands. While one group views the

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182. "Egypt: Elections Offers Public Debate, Not Free Choice," *Human Rights News*, 2 September 2005, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/09/02/egypt11682.htm> (accessed 24 September 2005).

183. "Egypt election row sparks protest," *BBC News*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/4234162.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4234162.stm) (accessed 24 September 2005).



changed international structure as an opportunity to press for democracy – the time is now. Another group proposes that demands on the state should be postponed until the external threat is defeated – the time is later. As these preferences compete, the state becomes increasingly insulated from direct challenges. Given this scenario, the probability of a transition to democracy decreases.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

In sum, the findings presented support the conclusion that a consensus on democracy has not been reached. A consensus of opinion on the issue of democracy could have served to exert indirect pressure on the state in the absence of organized and mobilized political parties for democratic changes. Instead, the data indicates that the political discourse as reflected on al Jazeera is evenly polarized. American intervention has encouraged the formation opposing movements, and consequently, diluted the internal pressure which a coherent public opinion might have been able to yield. Emotions serve to maintain the divide and ensure that no one side dominates (favorable and unfavorable). While emotions fuel critical and anti-US frames, it hinders the dominance of pro-democracy frames. Given that democracy is generally supported in the region, pro-democracy frames will remain present. The parity between these diametrically opposed positions is evidence of the polarization of the political discourse and signals to the state that the threat of internal pressure is weakened. In this environment, states can implement cosmetic changes at their leisure and without fear of great consequences. In the end, this polarization leads to maintenance of the status quo and not democratization.

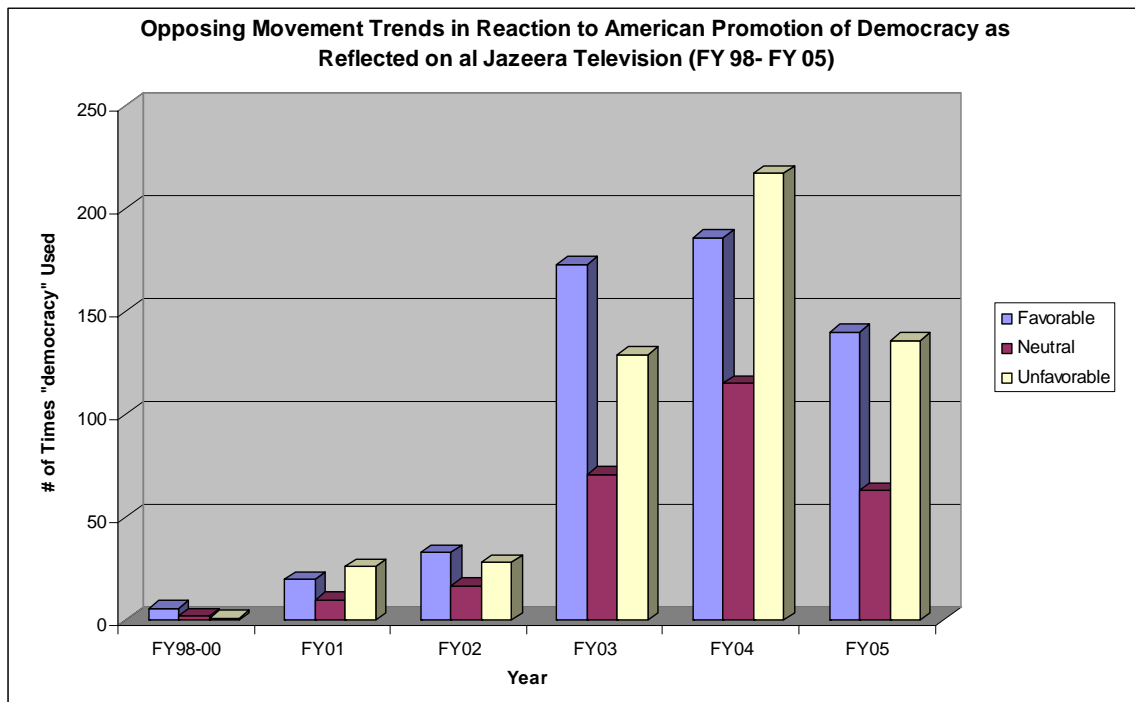


Figure 3. Graph of Opposing Movement Dynamics as Reflected on al Jazeera.

Frame Type	FY98-00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	Totals	Percentage of Total
Favorable	6	20	33	173	186	140	558	40.64%
Neutral	2	10	17	71	115	63	278	20.25%
Unfavorable	1	26	28	129	217	136	537	39.11%
<b>Totals</b>	9	56	78	373	518	339	1373	

Table 1. Recorded Number of Articulations as Expressed on al Jazeera.

Trend	FY98-00	FY01	FY 02	FY03	FY04	FY05
<b>Favorable</b>	66.67%	35.71%	42.31%	46.38%	35.91%	41.30%
<b>Neutral</b>	22.22%	17.86%	21.79%	19.03%	22.20%	18.58%
<b>Un-Favorable</b> (total/critical)	11.11%/ 100%	46.43%/ 61.54%	35.90% / 75.00%	34.58%/ 84.50%	41.89%/ 98.16%	40.12 %/ 81.62%

Table 2. Annual Trends Captured on al Jazeera.

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## V. CONCLUSION

“Who cares about al Jazeera and who cares about democracy in the Middle East?” Realist like John J. Mearsheimer may say that whether states in the Arab world are democratic or not is irrelevant so long as they do not conflict with American interests. Besides, all this talk of promoting democracy is merely a facade for *realpolitik* concerns. American politics is rife with ideological appeals and inconsistencies. Politicians customarily stoke emotions to gain support for their policies. Words that evoke emotions such as freedom, liberty and democracy are commonly used. However, the use of these emotionally laden words, do not necessarily mean that they represent actual objectives. Because of American cultural propensity to liberal thoughts and optimistic outlooks, American policies have to be shrouded in idealistic verbiage to mask fundamentally realist calculations and to entice popular support.<sup>184</sup>

Regardless of why we engage in rhetoric and the liberal use of words like democracy, words are not trivial; words have consequences. When Ayatollah Khomeini announced his rhetoric, of exporting Iran’s revolution across the globe, the world took notice because of the potential for his words to inspire actions.<sup>185</sup> When Ambassador April Glaspie warned Saddam Hussein in equivocal terms, it was her words that propelled Saddam to action for he believed that his invasion of Kuwait would be tolerated if not sanctioned by the U.S.<sup>186</sup> Dismissing talk as merely rhetoric is costly. Likewise, engaging in rhetoric carelessly is equally as harmful. Information technology has helped to raise the stakes; while in the past a verbal faux pas was relatively manageable because of limited coverage internationally, with the advent of 24-hour satellite television news stations, internet blog sites, and satellite radios, etc., information travels faster, wider and with less control. Consequently, when misstatements are made they are more difficult to correct because of the decentralization of the information infrastructure. While it is preferable to avoid miscommunications, they are likely given globalization and the

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184. John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 24 and 26.

185. Efraim Karsh, *The Iran-Iraq War: 1980-1988*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2002), 12.

186. Ibid., 91-92.

variety of cultural sensitivities. As such, monitoring and analyzing the targeted audience's reception is essential to align the presented information in a manner consistent with the desired outcome. I analyzed the expressions reflected on al Jazeera to understand how the region is responding to America's demands for democracy. While al Jazeera is the medium under observation, it is social movement theory that facilitates analyzing the manifested reactions. This chapter reviews the previous chapters' contributions, addresses some possible criticism and closes with some final words.

## **A. CHAPTERS IN REVIEW**

In Chapter I, I outlined why the thesis is relevant by discussing the importance of democracy, the literature on democracy in the Middle East, and the policy implications. Spectacular terrorist attacks have caused America to reassess its policies in search of a solution capable of combating terrorism. In light of the favorable research of the impact of democratic structures on domestic and international behavior, American policy makers are attracted to democracy as an effective option to contain terrorism. Among its many appealing characteristics, from a policy perspective, the ability of democracies to moderate extremist tendencies through inclusion and participation is highly desirable. The rationale is that if America can alter the conditions that supposedly breed terrorism, then terrorism can be defeated. Democracy is a system of governance that impacts the social, economic, and political aspects of society and would fundamentally alter the conditions currently present in the Middle East. Consequently, democracy promotion in the Middle East has become an integral aspect of American foreign policy. This policy, however, is not without risk, as the example of Turkey's democracy showed. Responding to Turkish popular opinion, the Turkish parliament opposed American demands to use Turkey as a launching base for its advance into Iraq.

Literature on American promotion of democracy in the Arab world has been sparse given that American emphasis of the region is relatively new. To date, *Uncharted Journey* is one of the few authoritative and systematic works on American efforts in the region. Research and scholarship from other areas indicate that democracy promotion is far from a fixed science. Democracy promotion does not equate to changes in policies in the same direction. America's record at effecting democratization has been mixed and

inconsistent. In spite of financial investments and military intervention, Haiti, which lies within its hemisphere, remains resistant to democratic change and is unstable. Chile, on the other hand, has been successful at transitioning to democratic norms.

This research is relevant for social movement theorists, policy makers, and military strategists. For theorists, the research suggests a broader range of application. This includes analyzing and comparing different compositions of transnational organizations to include those composed of states versus those composed of non-governmental organizations and assessing how group composition impacts state behavior as well as oppositional movement formation. For policy makers, this study suggests reevaluating the utility of subordinating democracy promotion as a foreign policy objective. Democracy is essentially a domestic policy option; in making democracy an explicitly stated foreign policy objective it creates the perception that democracy is strictly a foreign agenda and engenders resistance. American policy makers may have more success at persuading the region to embrace the concept by disassociating democracy from the American government and allowing non-governmental agencies to advocate its usefulness as a general good. For military strategists, transitional democracies or increased demands for change create volatile operating environments. Contingency plans must account for a wider assortment of political outcomes in support of national political objectives. The establishment of democracies in the region does not guarantee support for American interests, so secondary and tertiary bases and resources from the region must be secured to maintain a forward and operational presence. To improve the military's ability to achieve its tasks efficiently, personnel training and investment should focus on educating military members of the region's historical and cultural norms to minimize miscommunications and misunderstandings that serve to undermine American interests.

In Chapter II, I provided background information to place democracy and American promotion of democracy into context, which helps in understanding the region's reaction and social movement theory's applicability. I reviewed the various definitions of democracy, covered the America's history of promoting democracy in the region, and provided a current assessment of its efforts. In reviewing the definitions of democracy, it becomes apparent that democracy is highly subjective, for it is a "contested

term.” Scholars have manipulated its meaning further to fit their criteria. Nonetheless, in spite of the variation, some commonalities do exist within this diversity, and one common point is on the issue of elections. Most definitions of democracy contain some electoral process that incorporates mass participation. The key point, however, is to recognize that a variety of democracies exist and to appreciate the difficulty of promoting an ideal that, in reality, does not exist in practice or scholarship. This reality has led to the charge that American promotion has never been about democracy but rather about stability (status quo) in the forms of polyarchies.

Still, democracy promotion has been an interest and part of the rhetoric of American presidents from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush. As discussed in Chapter I, democracy was viewed as a tool to minimize unnecessary warfare and advance economic prosperity. In the Middle East, however, other considerations, such as depriving Soviet access to the region’s natural resources, took priority. Even after the end of communism and the spread of democracy, the region was largely ignored by American democracy promoters. Maintaining stability and supporting regimes capable of ensuring that stability in the region was preferred to empowering the people until 2001. Thereafter, democracy promotion was pursued not for empowering Middle Easterners, but for enhancing American security.

Current assessments of U.S. efforts have been tepid. States such as Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia that have expressed support for democratic reforms have not taken substantial measures to support their affirmations. The actions they do take lead to little or no significant change; they continue to impede democratic progress. The authors of *Uncharted Journey* add that focusing on civil society, women’s issues, and economic liberalization have not proven effective at pressuring the states to democratize. Instead, foreign support of these programs has benefited the states. In the case of women’s issues, increasing the number of women in government is a simple way for regimes to improve their image while not changing their substance. The authors suggest that these unintended consequences result from the insufficient number of Middle East experts with democracy promotion experience – both skill sets (Middle East expertise and democracy promotion



experience) are necessary to improve efficiency. Additionally, the authors cite that the U.S.'s lack of a coherent strategy is impeding its effectiveness as efforts are uncoordinated and conflicting.

In Chapter III, I presented the thesis' theoretical framework and methodology. I began by reviewing opposing movement dynamics, followed by frame contests, then al Jazeera and its role as a communicative platform, and ended with the methodology. I used social movement theory as a framework because it covers several dimensions of behavior that are applicable when analyzing Arab reactions to American promotion. Specifically, social movement theory looks at structural or environmental factors, group dynamics and individual behaviors. In other words, it is a holistic approach to understanding individual and group behavior within a fixed context because these various levels interact and influence subsequent actions. Given that my focus was on analyzing Arab reactions, then this application is appropriate. My application, however, differs from the conventional usage of the theory. Traditionally, social movements are groups or individuals who are non-state actors that pressure the states for policy and or political change. Though America's campaign does not fit this basic characteristic because a state (the U.S.) rather than a group of individuals is the agent, it is engaged in the same functions as a social movement. Specifically, social movements mobilize their resources, which may include people, media, finances, etc., and engage in interpretive struggles (frame contests) to persuade the states, elites, public, and by-standers to support their agenda. American democracy promoters are engaged in these same functions. American policy makers have mobilized their resources particularly their financial and media resources and engaged in frame competition to persuade the region and the state to embrace democratic change. So while there are fundamental differences between a state as a social movement actor and groups of individuals as social movement actors the application is still apropos since the focus of this thesis is on opposing movement formation or Arab reaction. Alternatively, the Middle East experiences and interprets America's promotion of democracy as if it were a social movement to fundamentally change the society and they are responding accordingly.

Social movement theory explains that structural changes, such as wars, economic depressions, splits among ruling elites, and new international norm, etc., create openings

that movement actors may interpret as favorable for action. American advocacy for democracy helped to create an atmosphere favorable to push for change. Also, because demands for change inevitably lead to a restructuring of costs and benefits, favorable for some and unfavorable for others, such demands are inevitably contested. If the U.S. is successful in persuading the states to transition to more democratic governance, some members of society stand to lose their political positions, material comfort and prestige to the advantage of another group of individuals. Consequently, opposing movement formations are likely in reaction to U.S. demands, because like the reactions observe within social movement theory and in case studies such as the pro-life and pro-choice dyads, demands for societal changes that impact the broader society inevitably leads to contestation.

While opposing movement dynamics can manifest in activities such as pro-Iraqi war and anti-Iraqi war demonstrations, this dynamic is also observable in analyzing the discourse reflected on the media. Opposing movements try to persuade the state and mobilize support by offering compelling frames or interpretations. These frames, however, are not instantly accepted and are contested by opposing interest groups, the public, the media, etc. To persuade the Middle East, American policy makers have relied heavily on the media, particularly satellite television. In fact, to maintain continuous access to this resource, America invested in launching al Hura satellite television station so that its messages are conveyed. According to social movement theory, movements create the conditions for opposing movements. For instance, anti-abortion protesters picketing of abortion clinics will likely result in opposing movement actions. While pro-abortion advocates could take their protests to the local court, the likelihood is that the pro-abortion group will counter the anti-abortion protesters at the clinic. In other words, social movements establish the setting for contestation. Similarly, American use of satellite television to advance its frames encouraged opposing movements to compete in offering alternate frames on satellite television.

I used al Jazeera as a platform to observe and analyze the frame contests over the issue of democracy and how it is associated with America. I selected to focus on al Jazeera because of its popularity and because of its reputation for presenting a wide variety of views. I also selected to focus on al Jazeera because, comparatively speaking,

the discourse reflected on the station is uncensored. Since the object of the research was to observe Arab reactions to understand its impact for U.S. policy, I wanted to have access to a broad range of perspectives with minimal regional state influence. In analyzing how the discourse impacts democratization, I used Marc Lynch's research, which showed that when a consensus of opinion exists it can serve to exert indirect pressure against the state for action which could include democratization. Al Jazeera is well suited for this role, given that regional states and American policy makers monitor the station and this attention impacts their perception and policy options.

My method involved reviewing 576 records of Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) records on al Jazeera and annotating the connotation associated with each articulation of the word "democracy" when "America" is also referenced within the same context. Each articulation was categorized into respective frames such as pro-democracy, anti-democracy, etc. The timeframe covered was 1 January 1998 to 1 September 2005. A total of 1,373 data points were then tabulated and graphed to observe any trends and conduct quantitative analysis.

In Chapter IV, I explained my main findings, which are that frames have changed since the commencement of American promotion of democracy in the Middle East; a contest of frames is evident; credibility remains a central problem in advancing American interests, and polarization of the political space has occurred. In light of these findings, I explored the implications for states and democratization. Since 2002, the democracy frames reflected on al Jazeera have changed. First, from 2002 to 2003, likely due to the high expectations of American success in implanting liberal reforms, democracy was viewed favorably and as an independent ideal. As such, in 2003, favorable expressions reached its peak at 46.4 percent compared to 34.6 percent unfavorable frames. Then, from the end of 2003 to 2004, democracy and America began to be closely associated, and the discourse became increasingly unfavorable as disillusionment with American progress began to crystallize. By the end of 2004, democracy and America became conflated – the frame of democracy has changed from democracy as a general good to a democracy inherently American in design. Consequently, favorable expressions decreased by 22.6 percent while unfavorable expressions increased by 21.1 percent.

A frame contest is also evident, and the competing frames are between “real democracy” and “American democracy.” “Real democracy” is presented as self-evident and not requiring of additional clarification, whereas “American democracy” is portrayed as not only American in design, but also associated with state collapse, prisoner abuse, violence, death, and general destruction. The frame contests have reflected prominently since 2004. There were also attempts to present other alternatives. One option called for a democracy that reflects Arab cultural and historical sensitivities and is separate from American or Israeli interests. Another alternative was political Islam. These alternative frames however were secondary to the dominant “real” or “American” frames.

American credibility remains a key factor impacting the region’s reception of its messages. Recalling from Chapter III that frame resonance or success is a product of salience and credibility, America lacks the credibility to advance its interest undeterred in the region. The majority of unfavorable frames (critical and anti) have been critical of U.S. democracy promotion efforts – 87.7 percent of total unfavorable frames comment on American credibility.

By 2005, a clear polarization of the political discourse on democracy developed; while 41.3 percent expressed favorable views of democracy, 40.1 percent expressed unfavorable sentiments. Looking at the total number of recorded data also shows that polarization of the political discourse is ongoing – 40.6 percent were favorable while 39.1 percent were unfavorable. Emotions served to sharpen and maintain the polarization by making siding with “American democracy” synonymous to betrayal of one’s Arab or Muslim identity.

## **B. CRITICISMS**

Like any contested field, this thesis is likely to result in multiple criticisms. Though I cannot and do not address all possible criticisms, I would like to focus on three. First, some could argue that al Jazeera’s influence may be waning and thus the relevance of this research may soon prove dated. Second, others could counter that the polarization reflected in the data may be a result of the combative nature of the media more so than a

true polarization of discourse. Lastly, some could be inclined to dismiss the relevance of the research because, after all, Arabs reject anything that is associated with America so democracy promotion is not different.

Some could argue that al Jazeera's influence may be waning and, thus, the relevance of this research may become dated. While this thesis uses al Jazeera as a communication platform it could have easily used al Arabiya or Abu Dhabi television outlets. Al Jazeera was selected for the reasons outline above. The point of this research is not on al Jazeera but on how American democracy promotion resembles social movement behavior and thus encourages opposing movement reaction. Consequently, the relevance of this research is not intrinsically tied to the fate of al Jazeera. Other platforms can also serve to observe opposing movement dynamics for these dynamics remain consistent in light of American behavior.

Others could counter that the polarization reflected in the data may be a result of the combative nature of the media more so than a true polarization of discourse. Though it may very well be possible that the polarization reflected in the data is symptomatic of television's nature, with its tendencies to show oppositional views, the impact on the audience remains the same. Alternatively, when a consensus on an issue is reflected on television it can indirectly impact or serve as a source of internal pressure against the state. Whether that polarization is a result of actual polarization of the political discourse, which I maintain it is, or a reflection of the nature of television, is irrelevant because the outcome (polarization) has the same effect on the audience (state).

Some could be inclined to dismiss the relevance of the research because after all Arabs reject anything that is associated with America so democracy promotion is no different. The data strongly refutes this conclusion. In 2003, the region was generally optimistic that America would help bring about democratic reforms. The attack against a fellow Arab state did not diminish their enthusiasm. Generalizations such as these do not help in understanding how to bridge an understanding and formulate sound policies. While anti-Americanism is common of the area, it does not mean that American related concepts are immediately rejected.

### **C. FINAL WORDS**

Democracy promotion is a difficult and potentially rewarding endeavor, but requires finesse to avoid unintended backlashes. An elemental part of that promotion is selling an interpretation. The U.S. has attempted to sell the Middle East an interpretation of democracy that reflected more of what was at stake for American interests than how it would address the Arab world's concerns. America called for the Middle East to embrace democracy to make the U.S. and the Western world safe – democracy was framed as inherently American. Because of the similarities between American behaviors and those of social movements, the region reacted as if faced with a social movement. Oppositional movements formed and engaged in frame contests on al Jazeera television. The frame contests have resulted in the polarization of the political discourse. In light of this development, the states, which monitor al Jazeera to keep abreast of emerging issues that may impact their policies, breathe a sigh of relief. For most Arab states are well versed in the practice of “divide and rule.” So long as the political discourse remains divided, the states can rule freely. In conclusion, American promotion of democracy has been counterproductive and actually helps to maintain the status quo.

## APPENDIX

### A. TIMELINE OF EVENTS (1998-2005)

#### **1998**

- 23 February: Osama bin Laden issued his fatwa calling for Muslims “to kill the Americans and their allies – civilians and military.”<sup>187</sup>
- 7 August: Al-Qa’ida attacked U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Sala’am, Tanzania.
- 28 October: Israel and Palestinians signed the Wye Memorandum. The document called for Palestinians to combat terrorism.

#### **1999**

- 7 February: After four decades of power King Hussein of Jordan, the region’s longest ruling leader, passed away. His son Prince Abdullah, an untested leader, took his mantle.

#### **2000**

- 10 June: Syrian President Hafez al-Assad died. His son Bashar al-Assad assumed the presidency.
- 28 September: Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount. The second Palestinian *intifada* – *al Aqsa*. began.

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187. “Text of Fatwah Urging Jihad Against America,” *Al-Quds al-‘Arabi*, 23 February 1998, <http://www.ict.org.il/articles/fatwah.htm> (accessed 20 March 2005).

- 30 September: Twelve-year-old Mohammed al-Durra was shot and killed by Israeli fire as his father held him in his arms. The image was captured and broadcasted on Arab television and became an iconic figure of the second *intifada*. Shortly after, the top Arab recording artists released the song “Jerusalem Will Return to Us” in which the boy’s name is featured prominently.<sup>188</sup>
- 12 October: Al-Qa’ida attacked the U.S.S. Cole in Aden Harbor, Yemen.

## **2001**

- January: President George W. Bush inaugurated.
- February: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon assumed power.
- 11 September: Al-Qa’ida attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon using civilian airliners as weapons. Over 3,000 people killed.<sup>189</sup> In response to the attack, President Bush promised to lead a "crusade" to “rid the world of evil-doers.”<sup>190</sup> Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, who the Taliban sheltered in Afghanistan, were the prime suspects. America demanded that the Taliban extradite Osama bin Laden and close the terrorist training camps. The Taliban refused.
- October: Congress passed the USA Patriot Act to help combat domestic terrorism. Consequently, thousands of persons of Middle Eastern background were detained,

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188. Mohammed El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar, *Al-Jazeera*, (Cambridge: Westview Press, 2003), 8.

189. “Al-Qa’ida Attacks: From 1988-the present,” International Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders, [http://www.ict.org.il/inter\\_ter/orgattack.cfm?orgid=74](http://www.ict.org.il/inter_ter/orgattack.cfm?orgid=74) (accessed 20 March 2005).

190. Todd S. Purdum, “After the Attacks: the White House’ Bush Warns of a Wrathful, Shadowy and Inventive War,” *New York Times*, 17 September 2001, <http://www.nexis.com> (accessed 19 July 2005).



interviewed and investigated.<sup>191</sup> The Bush Administration requested that al Jazeera minimize its coverage of Osama bin Laden and tone down in “vitriolic” reporting.<sup>192</sup>

–7 October: American and British forces began their bombing campaigns against Afghanistan.

## **2002**<sup>193</sup>

–January: President Bush said Iran, Iraq, and North Korea “constitute an axis of evil.”<sup>194</sup>

–3 January: Israel announced plan to pull out of the West Bank.

–12 March: Israeli troops took over refugee camps in the Gaza Strip and reoccupied Ramallah in the West Bank.

–28 March: Arab League proposed a two-state settlement which involved exchanging peace for Arab lands with Israel. Israel confined Yasser Arafat to the

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191. See Susan M. Akram, “Outside View: Secrets Threaten Liberties,” *United Press International*, 30 October 2001, and Jim Lobe, “Rights U.S.: Anti-Muslim Incidents up three-fold – Report,” *Inter Press Service*, 30 April 2002, <http://www.nexis.com> (accessed 19 July 2005).

192. “US urges curb on Arab TV Channel,” *BBC News*, 4 October 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1578619.stm>, and Daniel Williams, “Al-Jazeera Ascends to World Stage,” *Washington Post*, 13 October 2001, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A52278-2001Oct12&notFound=true> (accessed 5 September 2005).

193. Information derived from timelines from *Guardian Unlimited*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,630014,00.html>; Infoplease, <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/iraqtimeline2.html>, and US International Information Programs, [http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/me\\_vision/me\\_vision\\_timeline.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/me_vision/me_vision_timeline.html) (accessed 5 September 2005).

194. “President Delivers ‘State of the Union,’” *The White House*, 29 January 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html> (accessed 19 July 2005).

occupied territories and demolishes his compound. Bush urged Arafat to control the violence for “he 'can do a lot more' to stop the terrorism.”<sup>195</sup>

–May: UN Security Council amended sanctions against Iraq to allow for humanitarian related supplies.

–June: President Bush announced his intent to make the spread of democracy a fundamental pillar in U.S.-Middle East foreign policy.<sup>196</sup>

–12 September: President Bush addressed the United Nations calling for stricter resolutions against Iraq.

–November: The UN Security Council approved of resolution 1441 which called for new weapons inspections in Iraq.

–December: Secretary of State Colin L. Powell launched the Middle East Partnership Initiative to promote reform and democracy in the Muslim world. The President approved the deployment of troops to the region.

## **2003**<sup>197</sup>

–20 January: Ariel Sharon dismissed European efforts to a peace settlement and voiced his preference for an American plan.<sup>198</sup>

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195. Ed Vulliamy, “Arafat’s last stand as Israel prepares to take stronghold,” *Guardian Unlimited*, 31 March 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,676882,00.html> (accessed 5 September 2005).

196. “President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point,” *The White House*, 1 June 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html> (accessed 19 July 2005).

197. Information derived from timelines from *Guardian Unlimited*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,630014,00.html> ; Infoplease, <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/iraqtimeline2.html>, and US International Information Programs, [http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/me\\_vision/me\\_vision\\_timeline.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/me_vision/me_vision_timeline.html) (accessed 5 September 2005).

198. Chris McGreal, “Sharon decries EU peace efforts,” 20 January 2003, *Guardian Unlimited*, 21 January 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,878272,00.html> (5 September 2005).

- 27 January: Hans Blix, head of the UN weapons inspection team, released the team's report and briefed they had not found a "smoking gun."<sup>199</sup>
- 28 January: During his State of the Union address, President Bush announced that America would lead an attack against Iraq if it does not fully comply with UN demands.<sup>200</sup>
- February: The Belgium Supreme Court ruled that Sharon and other military commanders involved in the 1982 massacre of 800 Palestinians in Lebanon could be prosecuted.<sup>201</sup>
- 19 March: President Bush announced the commencement of hostilities against Iraq.<sup>202</sup>
- 9 April: Baghdad fell to American forces.
- May: Mahmoud Abbas became the first Palestinian Prime Minister.<sup>203</sup>
- 1 May: Bush declared the end of major combat operations.

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199. Statement by Hans Blix to the UN Security Council, 27 January 2003, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/unmovic/2003/0127entblixrep.htm> (accessed 5 September 2005).

200. "President Delivers "State of the Union,"" *The White House*, 28 January 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html> (accessed 5 September 2005).

201. Conal Urquhart, "Israel scorns 'anti-emetic little Belgium,'" *Guardian Unlimited*, 14 February 2003, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,895288,00.html> (accessed 5 September 2005).

202. "Global Message," *The White House*, 19 March 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030319.html> (accessed 19 July 2005).

203. "Middle East Peace Chronology," U.S. Government's International Information Programs, [http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/me\\_vision/me\\_vision\\_timeline.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/me_vision/me_vision_timeline.html) (accessed 5 September 2005).

- 12 May: Suicide bombers attacked compounds housing Westerners in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – 35 people were killed including eight Americans.<sup>204</sup>
- July: The Iraqi Interim Government was inaugurated.
- 19 August: Suicide bombers attacked UN Headquarters, Baghdad, Iraq. UN Chief Envoy Sergio Viera de Mello is killed.
- 29 August: Ayatollah Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim and 80 others were killed in a suicide attack in Najaf, Iraq.
- 13 December: Saddam Hussein captured.

## **2004**<sup>205</sup>

- January: Thousands of Iraqis demonstrated in Baghdad and Basra in support of direct elections.
- 21 January: Israeli Air Force attacked the Beka'a valley in Lebanon in retaliation of Hizbullah missile strikes.<sup>206</sup>
- 2 February: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered plans to begin for the evacuation of settlements in Gaza.<sup>207</sup>

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204. Terrorist Attacks (within the United States or against Americans Abroad), <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001454.html>, and *BBC News'* Saudi Attack timeline, [http://newswww.bbc.net.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/3760099.stm](http://newswww.bbc.net.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3760099.stm) (accessed 5 September 2005).

205. Information derived from timelines from *Guardian Unlimited*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,630014,00.html> ; Infoplease, <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/iraqtimeline2.html>, and US International Information Programs, [http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/me\\_vision/me\\_vision\\_timeline.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/me_vision/me_vision_timeline.html) (accessed 5 September 2005).

206. Chris McGreal, "Israel Hits Back after Army Death," *Guardian Unlimited*, 21 January 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,1127642,00.html> (accessed 6 September 2005).

207. George Wright, "Sharon Orders Relocation of Gaza Settlements," *Guardian Unlimited*, 2 February 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,1137220,00.html> (accessed 6 September 2005).

- March: Thousands protested in Gaza, Lebanon, Turkey, Yemen and Egypt following Israeli forces' assassination of Hamas' founder and spiritual leader Ahmed Yassin who was eighty years old and wheelchair bound.<sup>208</sup> Calling the text unbalanced, the U.S. blocked a UN resolution sponsored by Algeria and Libya which would condemn Israel for the Yassin killing.<sup>209</sup> The Iraqi Governing Council signed the interim constitution.
  
- 31 March: A mob of Iraqis killed and mutilated four American civilian contractors in Fallujah, Iraq.
  
- April: Fighting erupted in southern Iraq following the closing of anti-American Shiite cleric Muqtada Sadr's al Hawaz newspaper.
  
- 29 April: Abu Ghraib prison pictures of abused prisoners were made public.
  
- 8 May: Internet video of the beheading of American civilian contractor Nicholas Berg was released.
  
- 17 May: Izzedin Salim, head of the Iraqi Governing Council was assassinated.
  
- May: 29: Gunmen attacked oil company compounds in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, took hostages from a nearby residential compound, and escaped through a police cordon.
  
- 18 June: Paul Johnson Jr., an American citizen living in Saudi Arabia was beheaded.

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208. "Sharon Vows to Continue 'War On Terror,'" *Guardian Unlimited*, 22 March 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,1175381,00.html> (accessed 6 September 2005).

209. Jackie Dent, "US Vetoes UN Yassin Resolution," *Guardian Unlimited*, 26 March 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,1178884,00.html> (accessed 6 September 2005).

- 28 June: The U.S. officially transferred sovereignty to the Iraqi government – Iyad Allawi sworn in as Iraqi Prime Minister.
- August: Coalition forces engaged in fighting in Najaf, Iraq with Sadr’s followers.
- September: Secretary of State Collin Powell declared that genocide is occurring in Darfur, Sudan.<sup>210</sup>
- October: Car bomb attacks in Sinai, Egypt; at least 30 killed and over a hundred wounded.<sup>211</sup>
- 9 October: Afghanistan held its first presidential elections.
- November: American forces launched major assault operations in Fallujah, Iraq.
- 2 November: President Bush re-elected for a second term.
- 11 November: After 30 years of leadership, Yasser Arafat died in Paris, France.<sup>212</sup>
- 6 December: Gunmen attacked U.S. consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

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210. “Powell declares genocide in Sudan,” *BBC News*, 9 September 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3641820.stm> (accessed 6 September 2005).

211. Conal Urquhart, “Dozens killed in bomb blasts at Sinai resorts,” *Guardian Unlimited*, 8 October 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,1322786,00.html> (accessed 6 September 2005).

212. “Arafat begins final journey,” *Guardian Unlimited*, 11 November 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,1348445,00.html> (accessed 6 September 2005).

## 2005<sup>213</sup>

- 9 January: Mahmoud Abbas won the Palestinian presidential elections. The Sudanese government and the Sudan Popular Liberation Movement (SPLM) reached a peace agreement to end the country's civil war.
- 30 January: Iraqis voted in the elections for the National Assembly.
- 14 February: Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hairi killed in a car bomb attack.
- 22 February: Hundred protested against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and called for multi-party elections.
- 4 March: Saudi Arabia held municipal elections. Qatar's Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani announced plans to hold parliamentary elections in 2005 or early 2006.
- 26 March: Thousands demonstrated in Manama, Bahrain, demanding democratic reforms.
- 21 April: Israeli forces began removing equipment from the Gaza Strip.
- 26 April: After mounting international pressure, Syrian troops left Lebanon.
- 3 May: Oman court sentenced alleged conspirators who hoped to overthrow the sultan and establish an Islamic state.

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213. Information derived from timelines from *Guardian Unlimited*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,630014,00.html> ; Infoplease, <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/iraqtimeline2.html>, Terrorist Attacks (within the United States or against Americans Abroad), <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001454.html>, US International Information Programs, [http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/me\\_vision/me\\_vision\\_timeline.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/me_vision/me_vision_timeline.html), *BBC News*' 2004: Review of the Year, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/4091599.stm>, Terrorist Attacks (within the United States or against Americans Abroad), <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001454.html>, and MidEast Web, <http://www.mideastweb.org/iraqtimeline.htm> (accessed 5 September 2005).

- 7 May: Egypt arrested Muslim Brotherhood spokesman Essam el-Erian.
- 26 May: Bush announced plan to give the Palestinian Authority 50 million dollars for housing and construction.
- 21 June: The first Kuwaiti woman, Massouma al-Mubarrak, sworn in as a cabinet minister.
- 21 July: Thousands protested government's plans to cut fuel subsidies in Sana, Yemen.
- 23 July: On the anniversary of the 1952 "bloodless revolution," suicide bombers attacked Egypt's tourist town in Sharm el-Sheikh, 88 people were killed and more than 200 were injured.
- 4 August: Prince Abdullah became king following the death of King Fahd on 1 August.
- 17 August: Israel troops began evicting Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip.
- 28 August: Alliance of Sunni Association of Muslim Scholars and Muqtada al Sadr's movement rejected the draft Iraqi constitution.
- 31 August: Hundred of pilgrims died in a stampede in Baghdad, Iraq.
- 1 September: Thousands celebrated Muammar al-Qadhafi's 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary in power in Tripoli, Libya.



## B. ADDITIONAL GRAPHS AND TABLES

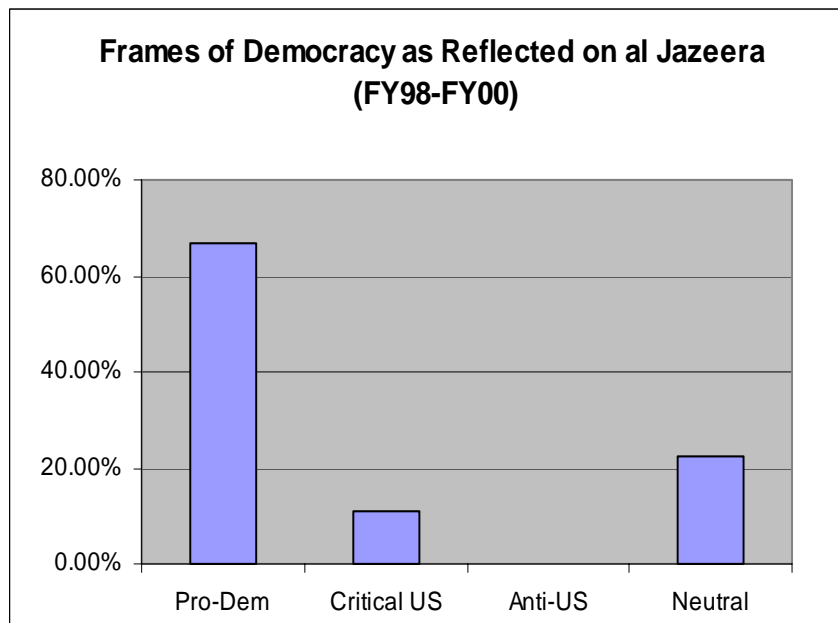


Figure 4. Graph of Articulated Frames (FY 98-FY00).

FY98-00	Number of articulations	Percentage
Pro-Dem	6	66.67%
Critical US	1	11.11%
Anti-US	0	0.00%
Neutral	2	22.22%

Table 3. Articulated Frames (FY 98-FY00).

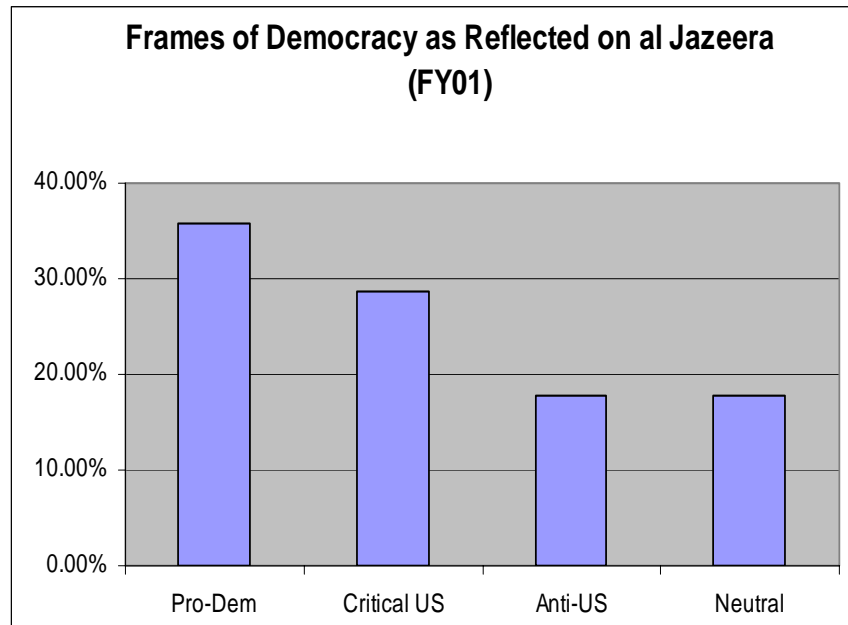


Figure 5. Graph of Articulated Frames (FY 01).

FY01	Number of articulations	Percentage
Pro-Dem	20	35.71%
Critical US	16	28.57%
Anti-US	10	17.86%
Neutral	10	17.86%

Table 4. Articulated Frames (FY01).

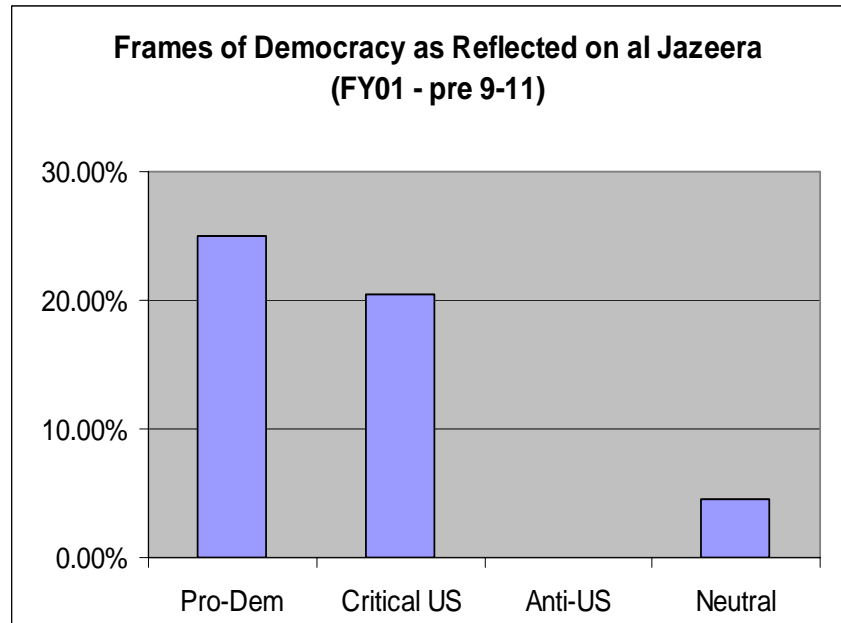


Figure 6. Graph of Articulated Frames (FY 01 – pre-9/11).

FY01-pre	Number of articulations	Percentage
Pro-Dem	11	25.00%
Critical US	9	20.45%
Anti-US	0	0.00%
Neutral	2	4.55%

Table 5. Articulated Frames (FY01-pre—9/11).

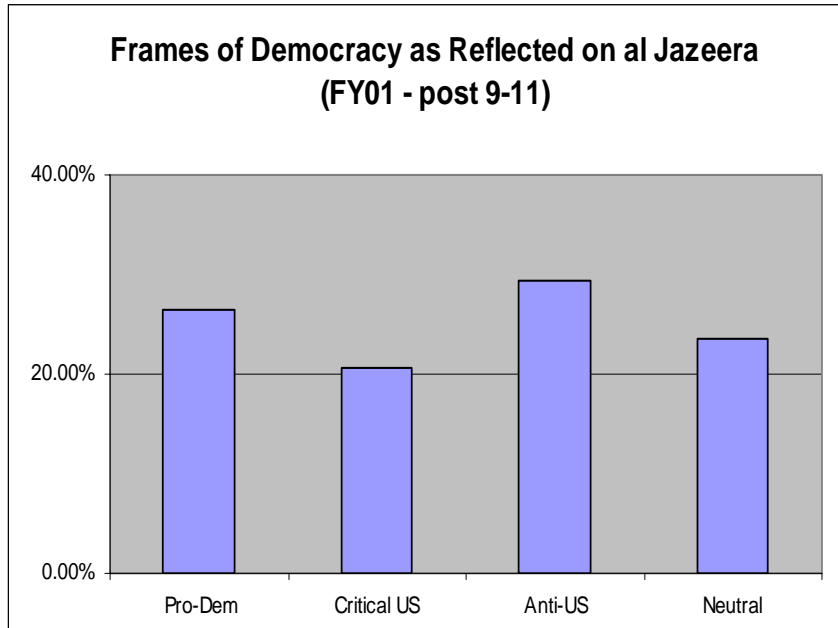


Figure 7. Graph of Articulated Frames (FY 01 – post-9/11).

FY01-post	Number of articulations	Percentage
Pro-Dem	9	26.47%
Critical US	7	20.59%
Anti-US	10	29.41%
Neutral	8	23.53%

Table 6. Articulated Frames (FY01-post—9/11).

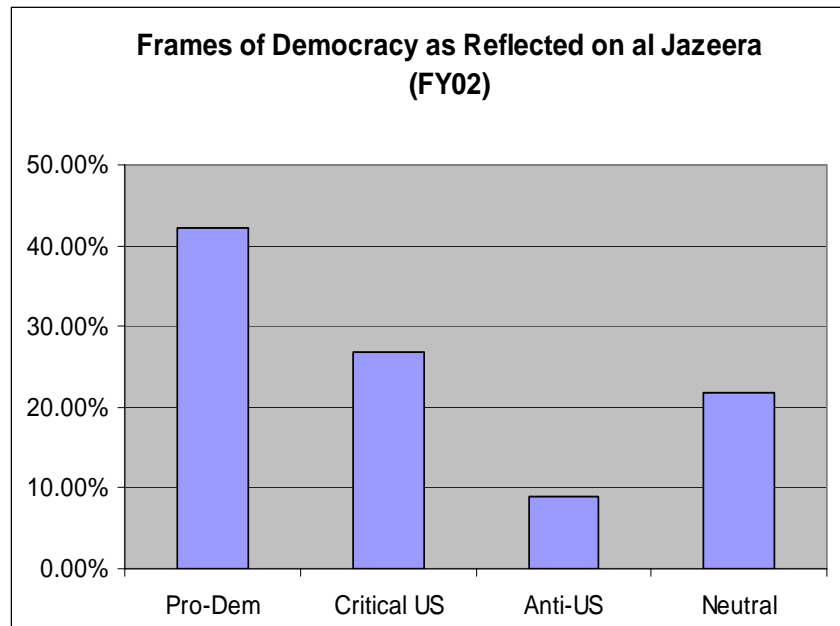


Figure 8. Graph of Articulated Frames (FY 02).

FY02	Number of articulations	Percentage
Pro-Dem	33	42.31%
Critical US	21	26.92%
Anti-US	7	8.97%
Neutral	17	21.79%

Table 7. Articulated Frames (FY02).

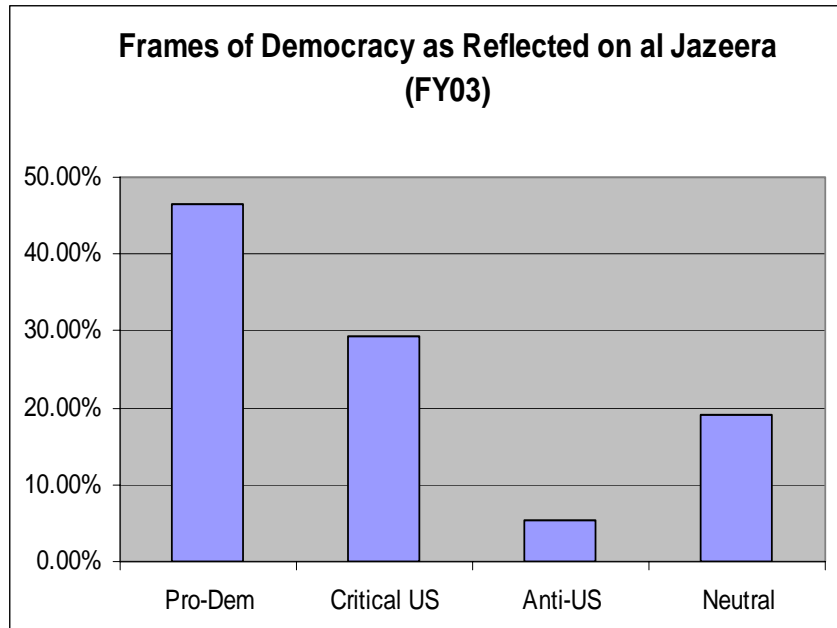


Figure 9. Graph of Articulated Frames (FY 03).

FY03	Number of articulations	Percentage
Pro-Dem	173	46.38%
Critical US	109	29.22%
Anti-US	20	5.36%
Neutral	71	19.03%

Table 8. Articulated Frames (FY03).

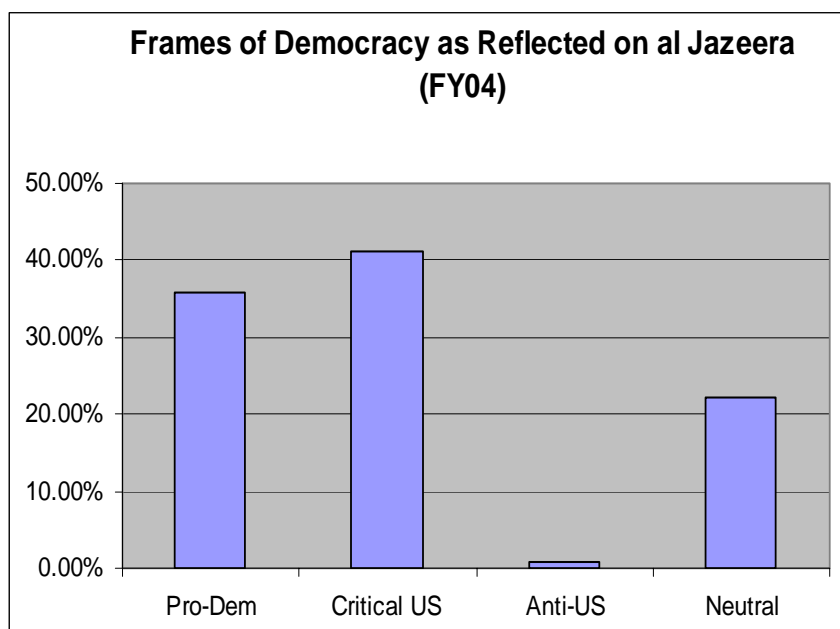


Figure 10. Graph of Articulated Frames (FY 04).

FY04	Number of articulations	Percentage
Pro-Dem	186	35.91%
Critical US	213	41.12%
Anti-US	4	0.77%
Neutral	115	22.20%

Table 9. Articulated Frames (FY04).

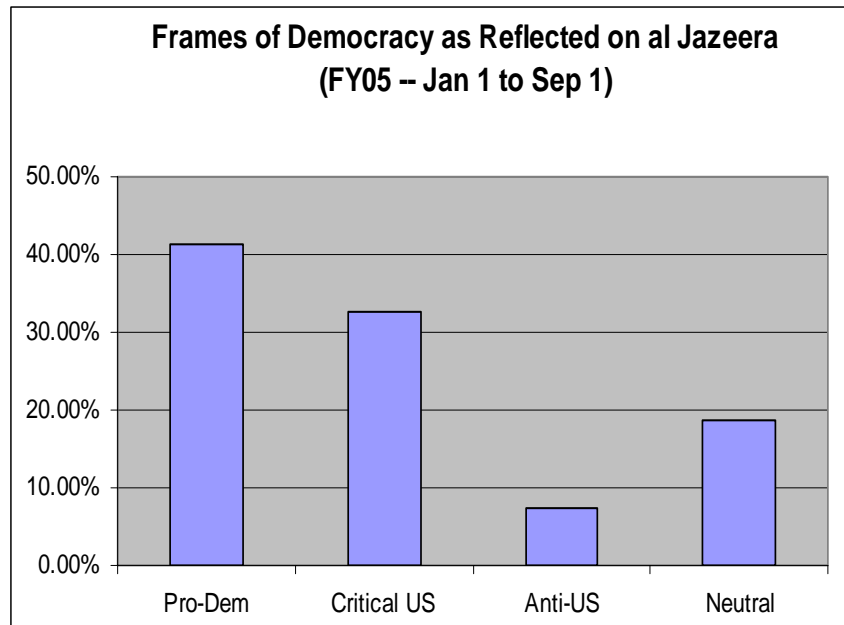


Figure 11. Graph of Articulated Frames (FY 05).

FY05 (1/1-9/1)	Number of articulations	Percentage
Pro-Dem	140	41.30%
Critical US	111	32.74%
Anti-US	25	7.37%
Neutral	63	18.58%

Table 10. Articulated Frames (FY05).



	<b>All records with democracy and America or United States and Bush</b>	<b>Total records on al Jazeera</b>	<b>Percentage of Coverage</b>
FY98-00	8	344	2.33%
FY01	35	1,888	1.85%
FY02	55	2,052	2.68%
FY03	147	3,410	4.31%
FY04	205	5,161	3.97%
FY05	126	2,570	4.90%
Total	<b>576</b>	<b>15,425</b>	<b>3.73 %</b>

Table 11. Al Jazeera Records by Year.

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